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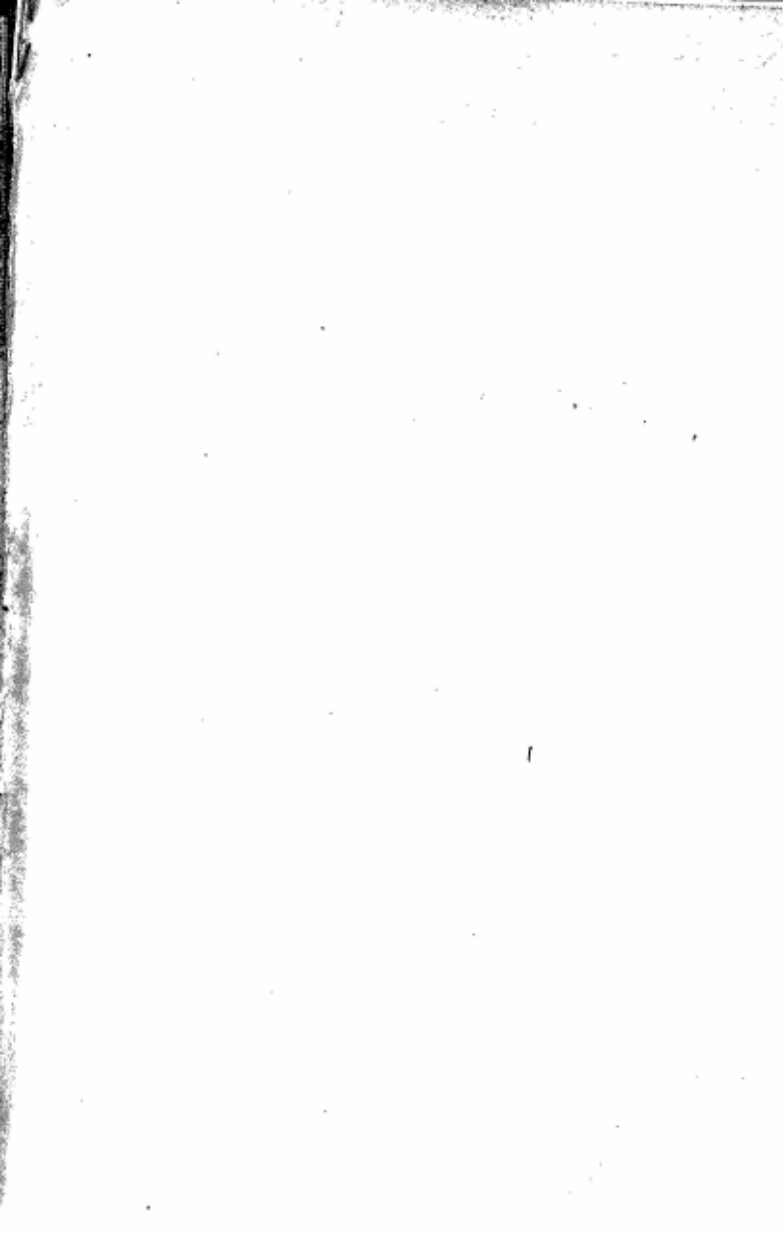
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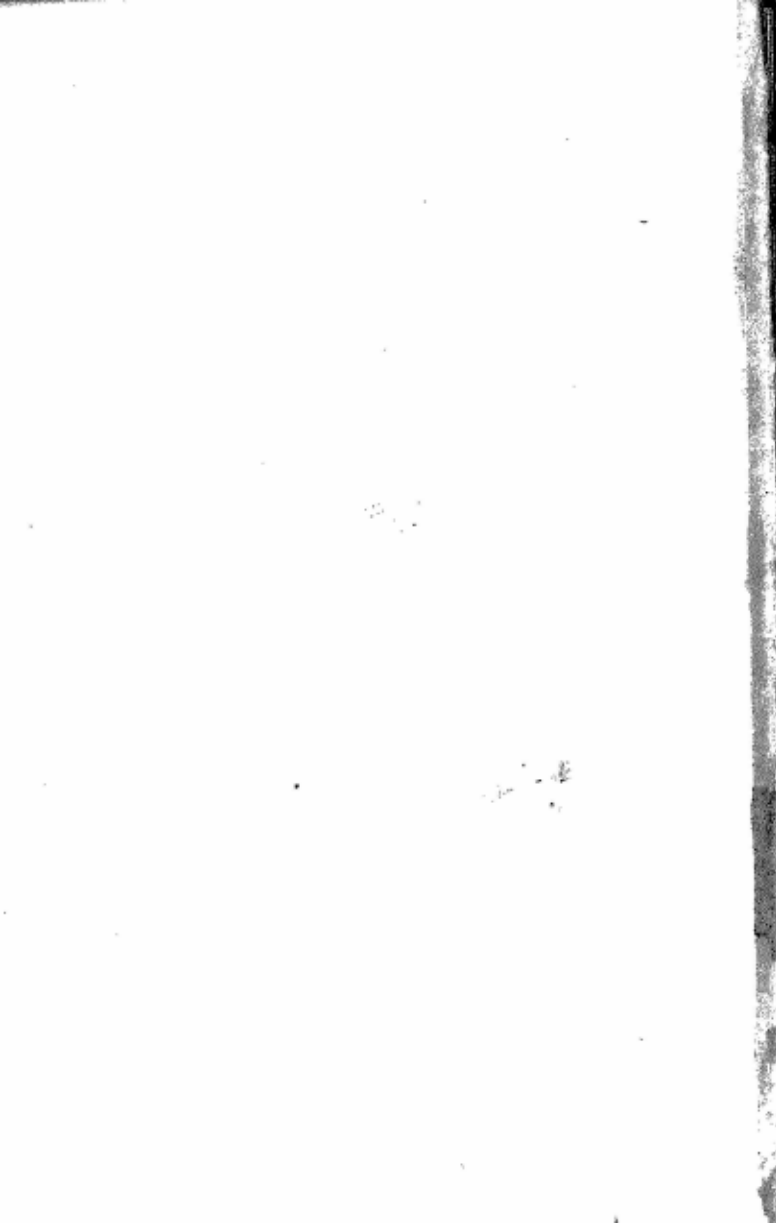
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# HINDU CHARACTER

(A Few Glimpses)

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Dhirendra Narain, M.A., Ph.D.



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## PREFACE

This work belongs to the genre of national character studies. The present attempt is kept confined only to the Hindus for the obvious but important reason that greater homogeneity exists among members of any single community than between members of two or more.

All culture and personality studies rest on the fundamental assumption that the spirit of one culture differs from that of another. An effort is made here to examine afresh the hackneyed distinction between the East and the West. Differences in the temperaments of some of the Asian nations have also been delineated. The various shades in the individuality of the Hindus are brought out by comparing them with the Chinese. Sharing much in common, the background of the Chinese was thought to be the best for underlining what is more specifically Hindu.

The importance of the *Bhagavadgītā* for the Hindu mind can hardly be over-emphasised. One may be spared the charge of exaggeration if one attributed to the *Gītā* the principal role in the formation of Hindu ideal. The *Gītā* ideal of equanimity and perfection has been critically examined in the light of what we today consider as maturity and growth. Its inevitable effects on Hindu character, for good as well as for bad, have also been suggested.

Through literature to life is an accepted method of approach. What is less known and still less attempted is the connection between the movies and the culture in which they are produced.

Literature on this subject (Indian cinema) is extremely scanty. Nevertheless, selected Indian films have been analysed for what light they throw on Hindu character.

Acquiring their significance from their closeness to life, proverbs provide a valuable source of understanding. Happily, collection of proverbs in quite a few Indian languages are available, which material has been freely drawn upon here. It is hoped that the study has thereby gained in its representativeness and in its nearness to the actual life of the people.

A prolonged period of childhood is a peculiarity of the homo sapiens. It is during this period that the infant absorbs the culture of the milieu (in which he is born) that equips him to function later as a participating (and, may be, contributing) member of his society. Whether the society is simple or complex, this process is unavoidable. The study of how a culturally neutral infant is slowly transformed into a Hindu or a Muslim, an Indian or an American is of absorbing interest. The last chapter, therefore, considers childhood as a period wherein the most important foundations of the adult Hindu personality are laid.

Although much too much has been written on the Hindus, it is rarely that even a semblance of scientific attitude has been attained. Implied or explicit, the guiding motive has often been either one of praise or of censure. Hindu character has been examined and explored here as dispassionately as possible and from such diverse sources as the *Bhagavadgītā* and the films. It is not often that the *Gītā* is critically examined; it is still rarer to have actually found any fault with it. It is for the first time perhaps that Indian films have been employed for the purpose of interpreting the character of the people, no doubt, on a modest scale.

To my teacher and guide, Prof. G. S. Ghurye, M.A., Ph.D. (Cantab.), F.N.I., under whose guidance this study was completed, I owe an amount of debt I cannot quite express. To his unfailing personal interest and constant encouragement are due the completion and publication of this work. Whatever merit it has,

not a little of it is due to his deep insight and discriminating scholarship. He is, of course, not responsible for my conclusions and for the many inevitable shortcomings for which I crave the indulgence of my reader.

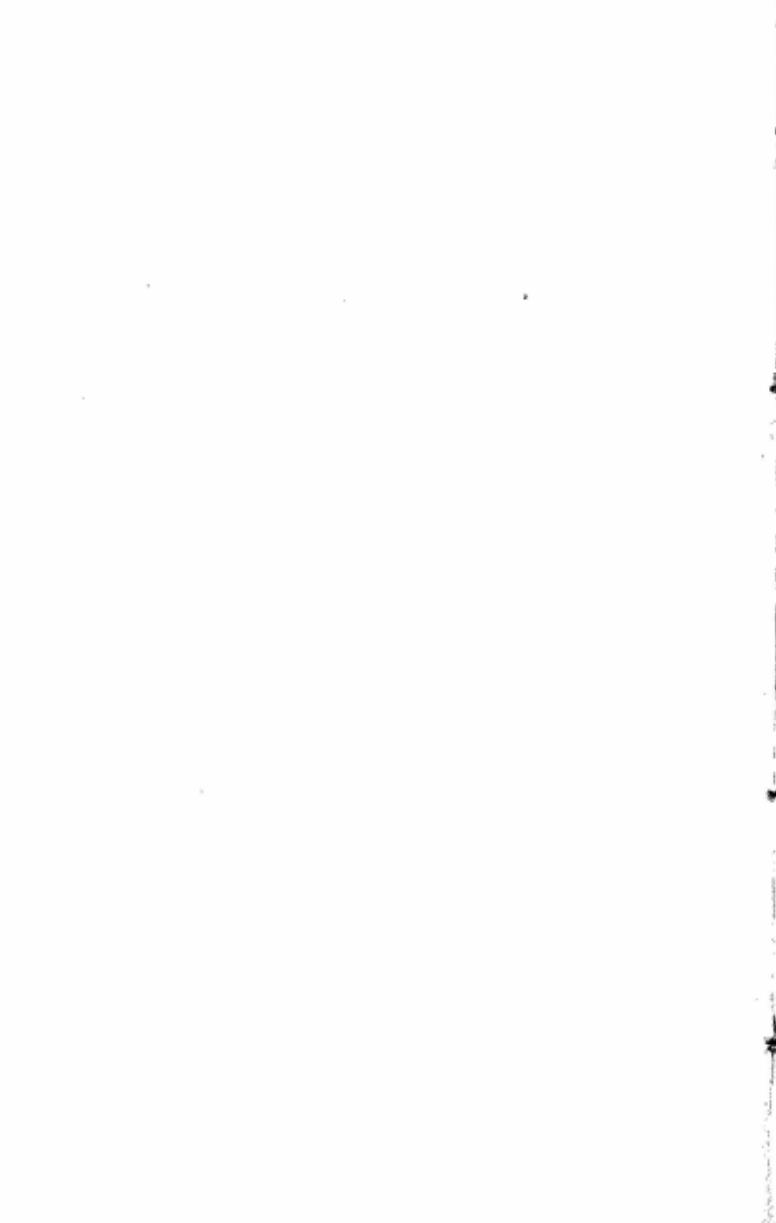
My grateful thanks are due to Shri M. G. Kulkarni, M.A., for his help in preparation of the index.

The present work was accepted for the award of the Ph.D. degree in Sociology in 1957 by the University of Bombay. I take this opportunity to thank the University of Bombay for publishing it in the University Sociology Series.

Bombay, 24th Dec., 1957.

D. NARAIN.

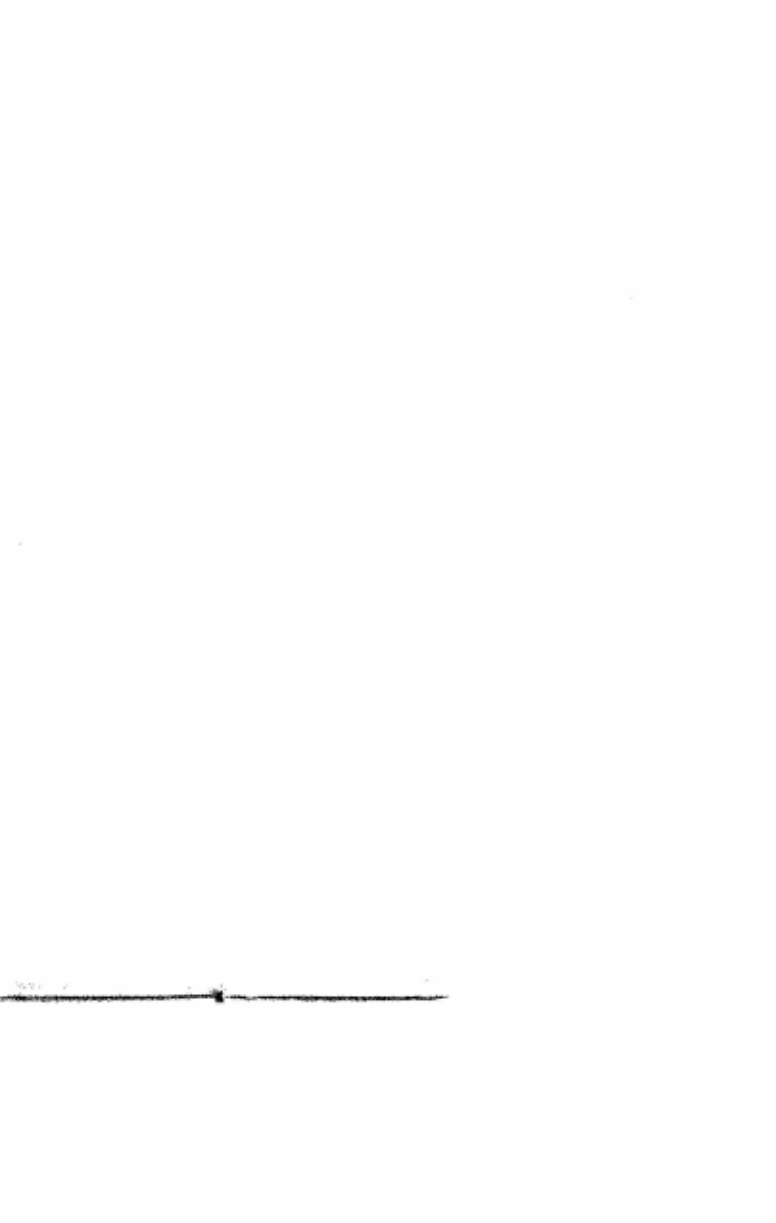
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## CHAPTER I

"Nevertheless, this much is certain: not only the inborn peculiarities of race, but also soil and climate, aliment and occupation, combine to form the character of a people."

—GOETHE,

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann*, p. 306.

"The vulgar are apt to carry all *national characters* to extremes; and having once established it as a principle, that any people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same censure. Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments: though at the same time, they allow, that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours."

—DAVID HUME,

"Of National Characters" in *Essays—Moral, Political, and Literary*, p. 244.

"A nation's institutions and beliefs are determined by its character."

—HERBERT SPENCER,

*Social Statics*, Pt. ii, Ch. 16, sec. 5.

## THEORETICAL APPROACH

The field of national character studies is one of the most fertile and promising areas of sociological research that has opened up today. It has received growing attention, in recent years, from anthropologists, sociologists and social psychologists. "During the last two decades a series of concepts such as "national character", "basic personality structure", and "social character", have come into increasing use in social science literature."<sup>1</sup> "National character studies are a recent development in anthropological research on problems of personality and culture."<sup>2</sup> Enough work has already been done to justify Hallowell in his remark, "We may say, I think, that the general hypothesis underlying culture and personality studies has been confirmed."<sup>3</sup> The present work is one more addition to the growing stock although, following Mead's distinction, it may occupy an intermediate position between culture and character studies.

While it is true that the World War II firmly established the study of national character as an area of anthropological interest, the trend to ignore earlier studies of this nature by non-

<sup>1</sup> A. Inkeles and D. J. Levinson, "National Character: The Study of Modal Personality and Socio-Cultural Systems" in Gardner Lindzey (Ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 977.

<sup>2</sup> M. Mead, "National Character" in A. L. Kroeber (Ed.), *Anthropology Today*, p. 642.

<sup>3</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, "Culture, Personality, and Society" in A. L. Kroeber (Ed.), *Anthropology Today*, p. 608.

"The full appreciation of culture as a phenomenon *sui generis* and as the paramount determinant of human behaviour can be called one of the major achievements of modern anthropology." S. F. Nadel, *Typological Approach to Culture, Character and Personality*, V, 1936-7, p. 268.

anthropologists is far from desirable. This omission becomes ridiculous when one finds an anthropologist of the standing of Kroeber writing: "Excellent delineations of culture patterns have in fact been presented by nonanthropologists, by historians and travelers. More than eighteen hundred years ago Tacitus gave to posterity one of the masterpieces of this genre in his analysis of German custom and character. So keen was his penetration that many qualities of his subjects are still recognisable in the Germans of today."<sup>4</sup> He writes in a similar appreciative vein about Immanuel Kant's *Anthropologie*, published as far back as 1789. "This was written more than a century and a half ago, when Germany was politically divided and impotent; but even after World War II most of it is still a surprisingly happy diagnosis."<sup>5</sup> Kroeber frankly admits: "Many such appraisals, nonprofessional though they be, seem to rest on sound observation."<sup>6</sup> It is, therefore, very surprising why non-anthropological writers should have found so little mention when they have not only been just pioneers in this field but also sometimes highly successful. It may be that anthropologists today are very much concerned with methodological problems while the non-anthropologists have straightaway attempted delineations, without making any explicit or systematic statement of their methods. But, if good results have been obtained in spite of meagre methodological tools and without the aid of modern psychology, certainly more and not less recognition is obligatory on our part. One cannot quite see how any open-minded student of national character can allow himself to overlook *The Genius of Europe* by Havelock Ellis. The book seeks to unravel the mental make-up of five important countries of Europe, viz., England, France, Spain, Germany and Russia. Though published in 1950, the individual essays were written at widely different dates, between 1901 and 1925. The approach is admittedly personal but it is heavily buttressed by an analysis of literature and of representative personalities. The fact that an author of the reputation of Havelock Ellis is not even entered in bibliographies (e.g., *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, (Eds.) M. Mead and R. Métraux) is an

<sup>4</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 586.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 585.

omission that cannot be recorded without regret. To mention only a few more instances. Madariaga is very fortunate in being entered in the bibliography of the said book and in being referred to by Margaret Mead in following terms: "An analysis of the plot of films or popular novels may serve to document consciously recognised themes (such as *success* in the United States or *self-control* in Britain) along the lines originally developed by Madariaga in his *Englishmen, Frenchmen and Spaniards*. . . ." But that is about all. Lin Yutang is mentioned by Otto Klineberg<sup>7</sup> but Ernest Barker shares the fate of Havelock Ellis. And the fact that two of the greatest philosophers of Europe—Immanuel Kant and David Hume—exercised their minds on the subject of national character, is not learnt from any of the many extensive bibliographies.

This would indicate that this branch of study, no matter how developed now, is by no means so young that its history need begin from either the first or the second World War. Even Mandelbaum has taken exception to Mead's historical account: "Among the less endorsable statements is the second sentence of the paper that 'They [national character studies] take their form and methods from the exigencies of the post-1939 world political situation.' This seems a bit sweeping in view of the enumeration, given later in the paper, of methods, most of which were developed and in use considerably before 1939." Hallowell's formulation is more cautious and acceptable: "Historically viewed, specialized interest in and systematic investigation of the problems in the area most familiarly labelled 'personality and culture' are a twentieth-century development in anthropology."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 651.

"A further application of this approach can be seen if we study such a book as Madariaga's *Englishmen, Frenchmen and Spaniards*. The book as it stands has probably not had the recognition it deserves, because in substance it says that the French are cognitive, the English connative, and the Spaniards affective." Gregory Bateson, *Some Systematic Approaches to the Study of Culture and Personality, Character and Personality*, XI, 1942-43, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> *A Science of National Character, Journal of Social Psychology*, 19, 1944, p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> David Mandelbaum, *On the Study of National Character, American Anthropologist*, 55, 1953, p. 178.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 597.

Hallowell goes back in referring to C. G. Seligman's presidential address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1923, the topic being the relationship between anthropology and psychology.

In fact, the concept of national character has a considerable past, though without the modern scientific precision and accuracy.<sup>11</sup> Whenever a trait was attributed to a nation or to a group as a whole, the fact of national or group character was already implied. The origin of Western thought is generally traced to Greek sources and as far as this concept is concerned, the greatest of Greek intellectuals is far from disappointing us. Aristotle has causally linked up climate with mental disposition in the following passage: "Those who live in a cold climate and in Europe are full of spirit but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom but have no political organisation, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive but they are wanting in spirit and therefore they are always in a state of subjection. But the Hellenic race, which is situated between them is likewise intermediate in character, being high spirited and also intelligent. Hence it continues free and is best governed."<sup>12</sup> Herodotus, the Greek historian has made references to traits of the Greeks, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Arabs and the Scythians that clearly suggest his belief in their national characters.<sup>13</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn, the Arabian scholar-statesman of the 14th century has described the Egyptians as "a nation inclined to merriment, frivolity and disregard of consequences."

Montesquieu, writing much later in the 18th century, posits national character and invokes climate to explain why legal systems differ from country to country. Climate evokes or inhibits response according as it is warm or cold. Laws should

<sup>11</sup> "The assumption that a social character exists has always been a more or less invisible premise in ordinary parlance; and it is becoming a more or less visible premise in the language of the social sciences." David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, VII, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Herodotus, *History*, pp. 85, 118, 120, 176, 180, 208, 417, 418, 488, 550.

take note of this instinctive disposition and should be framed in a manner that may hold in check the natural outbursts of impulses. Among many others, one may mention de Tocqueville, Emerson, Brogan, Dixon and Santayana. The number of scholars who have been fascinated by the phenomenon of national character is indeed large. Reviewing Michael Demiashkevich's *The National Mind—English, French, German*, Newell L. Sims writes, "Here is another book added to a long list dealing with national characteristics that has been growing since the days of Herodotus. Literature abounds in such works. It is a perennial subject. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Indian scholarship is notorious for its lack of historical sense and it is not possible to produce comparable data on India. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is claimed to be the only ancient book of a historical nature. And, although Kalhana makes no such reference to people that could be shown to imply national or group character, R. S. Pandit, his translator from the original Sanskrit to English, writes, "It would thus appear that the religion of a people is a matter of geography while their national characteristics and social and moral developments are due to their history."<sup>15</sup> It is very interesting to note that ancient books on erotics describe differences in the sexual characteristics of women in different parts of India. From quick orgasm to orgasm by prolonged intercourse, from preference for nail-scratching and teeth-biting to a dislike for such amours, from general acceptance of the passive feminine rôle to acting the rôle of male in coitus—such is the range of variation, each regionally localised, that are noted by Kalyanamalla, the author of *Ananga Ranga*.<sup>16</sup> Vatsyayana, the author of the oldest available book on erotics, makes similar regional distribution of sexual characteristics. Appreciation of recognisable differences within one culture, whether by region or by class, is growing with the modern students of the subject and it is noteworthy that these traits were observed by the ancient authors in the more

<sup>14</sup> *American Sociological Review*, III, 1938, p. 890.

<sup>15</sup> R. S. Pandit, *River of Kings* (Eng. trans. of *Rajatarangini*), p. xxxi.

<sup>16</sup> Actually regions are mentioned by their ancient names like Magadh, Anga, Andhradesh, etc.

inhibited and reticent of the two sexes.<sup>17</sup> One keenly regrets the absence of a paper like Ginsberg's "German Views of German Mentality"<sup>18</sup> on the Hindus.

It was current at one time—and not so long ago—to apply typological classification to cultures. It is no more fashionable to do so. For reasons discussed below, the present writer has decided to keep out of this, although he believes that some limited use can be made of typology for national character studies.

Typology has a long and fascinating history. It could easily be traced to the Greeks, more specifically to Hippocrates, who lived five centuries before Christ. His was the first attempt to introduce the concept of type and he gave us four of them, the choleric, the melancholic, the phlegmatic and the sanguine. In India, the three-fold ancient division of temperaments into *satva* (righteousness), *rajas* (wordliness), and *tamas* (darkness) has persisted down to this day. Since then, many attempts have been made in this field but no single contribution has been universally accepted and applied. It is generally conceded that Jung's psychological types of extroversion-introversion are perhaps the best known. Apart from the limitation inherent in typology, Jung's attempt is doubtless very successful. Interest in the self and interest in the outer world are the two spheres of anchorage and orientation. It is true that most people do not live in any one world exclusively. But it is also true that most people live more in one world than in the other. If Gardner Murphy's thesis that introversion-extroversion are not competitive but complementary tendencies be valid, there would be, by definition, no lop-sided development. Either one stagnates or if develops, one does so both ways. Mystics could become dictators as easily as dictators could establish communion with

<sup>17</sup> It might be objected that to record traits is not to study national character. But it is certainly the beginning of the study; when the observed traits increase in number, the study gains in comprehensiveness and depth.

<sup>18</sup> The study of 'national character' is carried out on two levels. There is the noting of characteristic traits, and there is the attempt to 'explain' them." W. J. H. Sprott, *Social Psychology*, p. 211.

<sup>19</sup> M. Ginsberg, *Reason and Unreason in Society*, Ch. VII.

God. But this is an ideal of integration we do not know if it is possible to achieve. Extroversion-introversion are not in a natural complementary relationship with each other. With most people, they are competitive. That one finds both traits in the majority of people is an argument which is for or against neither the complementary nor the competitive point of view. It only shows that both can co-exist. Only if introversion of a very high intensity and great absorption is found to co-exist with extroversion of a similar nature and force in the same person that Murphy's thesis will begin to be acceptable. But, who can say that when Tolstoy was a Bohemian, he was also a deep introvert, or when he did turn a deep introvert, almost to the point of morbidity, there was a strong extrovert in him?<sup>19</sup>

It might, then, be asked why Jung's classification has not been adopted. The reason is not any objection that we have to Jung's division but to typology in general (although it is obvious that introversion is the cap that fits the Hindus). The great attraction of typology is the neatness of the division and it is this neatness that turns out to be its fatal weakness when it is tested out. These ideal types are then supplemented by 'mixtures' which considerably take away the conceptual helpfulness of the original framework. But the greatest difficulty is best expressed in the words of Adorno who, summing up the various objections to typology, writes, "At the hub of all these arguments is the aversion against the application of rigid concepts to the supposedly fluid reality of psychological life."<sup>20</sup> This is confirmed also by David Riesman: "Thus while we shall be talking hereafter of social character types we must try to remember that these types are constructions and that the richness of human potentiality, human discontent, and human variety cannot be imprisoned within a typology."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The possibility of change from introversion to extroversion and vice versa is admitted by Jung himself.

<sup>20</sup> T. W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*, p. 744.

David Riesman remarks on the discussion of typology in this book, "...; it also contains (pp. 744-788) what is perhaps the finest discussion of the whole problem of typology in the literature." *Faces in the Crowd*, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *The Lonely Crowd*, p. 7.

As against individual types, there are social types. Social types are not synonymous with principal social roles, permitted and prized in a society, but refer to such dispositional tendencies that are either evoked or inhibited by the values of a particular culture. In this sense, the social roles of individuals in two cultures may be the same but the social types produced would differ, according as the underlying motivating ethos of the two cultures differ. The objection to social types is much the same as that to individual types, whether it is Max Weber's ideal type which is only a logical construct or Spranger's division of people into six fundamental categories: the theoretic, the economic, the æsthetic, the social, the political, and the religious.

An interestingly valuable attempt in the field of typological construction and its application to culture is by David Riesman. His typology of tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed is perhaps the best bridge we have between individual and social psychologies. Riesman himself rightly claims, "Consequently, the typology of character set forth in *The Lonely Crowd* is at the same time a typology of societies."<sup>22</sup> But Riesman especially devised it for delineating American society where "... individuals are trained to conform neither to tradition nor to internalized goals but to the ever-changing contemporaries;..."<sup>23</sup> Change would seem to be such a prominent feature of American life that the sub-title of Riesman's book *The Lonely Crowd* is *A Study of the Changing American Character*. In so far as it is possible and valid to describe a people in terms of a single type category (which Riesman himself has warned against although he calls Americans, by and large, other-directed), more Hindus would be tradition-directed, some inner-directed and fewer still, other-directed. Riesman's contention that "In the type of society depending on tradition-direction, social change is at a minimum, though upsets in personal life may be violent and catastrophic"<sup>24</sup> is borne out by the Hindu society. Contrariwise, the statement that "The development of this character type [other-directed], with its mode of sensitivity to others, is both

<sup>22</sup> *Faces in the Crowd*, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

cause and consequence of sweeping and accelerated changes in the social structure of the contemporary industrial society: . . ."<sup>25</sup> negatively proves the point. It is a matter of sociological prediction if the Hindus must inevitably change from tradition and inner-directions to other-direction as they go through the processes of industrialization and urbanization. Besides, Riesman's typology is closely related to the population growth of a society and the historical sequence of social character development. This approach is likely to prove more useful in future for the study of Asian national characters.

In an excellent article on national character,<sup>26</sup> the authors A. Inkeles and D. J. Levinson raise a number of important points that deserve our close attention. They start from the beginning, viz., the problem of definition. The authors very wisely recognise that the lack of explicit, formal statement about the definition, nature and scope of the subject has not been a hindrance but a help in "encouraging the expression of intuitive, clinical modes of thought and in permitting free play of ideas so important in a new field of study."<sup>27</sup> But they rightly think that it is not too early now to introduce some clarity and definiteness. Gorer also recognises the need of definition and complains of considerable ambiguity in the use of the term 'national character.' Gorer tentatively suggests the term 'social character' and 'basic character.' But he himself rejects the former as already having different kind of usage, the latter, he thinks, suggests a primacy "that does not seem to be warranted by the available facts or theories."<sup>28</sup> M. Mead would prefer the use of the term 'cultural character structure' as perhaps more appropriate. But it is a bigger term, without any compensating gain in meaning or precision. This leaves us with only one choice and that is the term 'national character' itself.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 977-1020.

Published in 1954, it runs into forty-three crown quarto pages which makes this article not only the latest on the subject but also the most comprehensive. It serves as useful basis for writing here.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 979.

<sup>28</sup> G. Gorer, "National Character" in M. Mead and R. Métraux (Eds.), *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, p. 57.

Inkeles and Levinson observe that perhaps the main thread running through the numerous definitions is that national character refers to characteristics that are common or standardised in a given society. Commonality or frequency is, therefore, an important criterion. But, while discussing the 'social character' term of Fromm, these authors notice an implied distinction between the socially required personality structure and the actual one in the treatment of both Fromm and Linton. This distinction is comparable to Gorer's separation between the analysis of "principal motives or predispositions which can be deduced from the behaviour of the personnel of a society at a given time and place" and "the ideal image of themselves in the light of which individuals assess and pass judgements upon themselves and their neighbours, and on the basis of which they reward and punish their children, for the manifestation or non-manifestation of given traits."<sup>29</sup> In short, the distinction is between the ideal and the actual. Inkeles and Levinson do not consider the societal requiredness or the ideal aspect as a part of the definition of national character. This seems to the present writer a very unfortunate restriction of the subject. Is the place of ideal so superfluous that it need not be considered? Perhaps ideals are taken as belonging too much to the realm of abstract ideas, too far removed from the actuality to have any motivating force. But this is far from true; ideals are not lifeless things. Ideals are not formulated only by thinking; there is a strong element of feeling tone in them. Nor is the intellectual act of thinking independent of the psychological structure of personality. Fromm has well expressed how the whole of a doctrine or a theoretical system as well as a single concept like love, justice, equality, sacrifice has an emotional matrix and this matrix is rooted in the character structure of the individual. "The fact that ideas have an emotional matrix is of the utmost importance because it is the key to the understanding of the spirit of a culture."<sup>30</sup>

Besides, a considerable part of the dynamics of human behaviour is due to the tension created by the impact of the ideal on the actual. As Gorer has put it, "The relationship between

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> E. Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, p. 240.

ideals and conduct is not a simple one; for, although they do not usually coincide in a one-to-one relationship, the ideal may be considered to influence conduct both in the choice of alternatives of behaviour and in the negative judgements by the self and/or others (guilt, shame, ostracism or other sanctions) when conduct deviates sharply from ideals.<sup>31</sup> In view of this, it would be very unproductive to leave out the ideals from consideration. Infact, it is possible to study various cultures and its peoples in terms of the ideals they hold and cherish. This is borne out by Ruth Benedict's study of the three cultures of Zuni, of Dobu and, of Kwakiutl, who are oriented as wholes in different directions. We, therefore, very much agree with Gorer when he writes, "National character cannot be fully described without taking into account the ideal character."<sup>32</sup> But Gorer's warning against confusion if description is written partly in terms of ideals and partly in terms of actual behaviour, and also if ideals are described as if they were identical with behaviour, is well worth remembering by all students of the subject.

From the foregoing, it would appear that we do not attach as much importance to the study of individuals as Inkeles and Levinson and many others do. A very great practical difficulty is here involved. From the practical point of view, it would be impossible for a single research worker to study psychologically the character structure of individuals of a large and representative sample. Even for the questionnaire method, adopted for the study of English character, Gorer has the following to remark, "...It is an extremely time-consuming technique unless the researcher has a staff of a fairly highly qualified assistants."<sup>33</sup> Gorer has been thoughtful enough to calculate the time it would have taken if the same questions were covered in interviews. He writes, "If one allows three hours for an interview, which considering the range of subjects covered is not excessive, the 11,024 informants would have taken something like 16 years to interview, working a 40-hour week, without taking into account the recording and subsequent coding."<sup>34</sup> And it must be remembered

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>33</sup> G. Gorer, *Exploring English Character*, p. 318.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

that interviewing a person is not the same as studying him psychologically. There is a distinct suggestion of deeper probing in psychological study which is, at best, only partially achieved in interviews, unless of course, interviews are prolonged. Given the material resources, it is possible to engage a staff to assist in the questionnaire method. But there can be no division of work in interviewing. If a team of research workers divide up the sample between themselves for separate interviewing, much of the most important advantage of the method would be lost. The deepening of insight that may hopefully occur if a single researcher interviews person after person, would be impossible when a team of workers pool together their diverse bits of insights and piece them together in some sort of a meaningful whole. The great advantage of team work is to bring to bear various skills and different specialities on a common problem. But when a single task, like interviewing, is split up, it makes for poorer result. On grounds of sheer practicality, the method of psychological study of individuals will have to be ruled out for any but the very simple and small community. Margaret Mead recognises the legitimacy of the objection that "... methods applicable to small primitive societies of relatively simple organisation are not applicable to nation states of many millions, since the very difference in size introduce qualitative differences in the possible methods of research."<sup>23</sup> To make, then, the approach through individuals a primary one in national character studies, as Inkeles and Levinson suggest, is clearly out of place, not possible to fulfil whenever the society studied is numerically large and not very homogeneous. As a matter of fact, they themselves later admit that "to do this adequately, even in a *small and relatively undifferentiated* society, is clearly an enormous task."<sup>24</sup> (italics mine) In spite of this admission on their part, one fails to understand why they repeatedly emphasise this method as a primary one. Does the merit of a method lie in making it an impossibility or near-impossibility?

Writing on "Problems In The Study of Modern Cultures," Gillin observes, "From the methodological point of view there

<sup>23</sup> M. Mead, "National Character" in A. L. Kroeber (Ed.), *Anthropology Today*, p. 646.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 998.

is nothing insuperably difficult about the solution of the problems. However, three things are required: (1) money, in fairly substantial amounts; (2) large number of well trained anthropologists; (3) the co-operation of specialists in other social and psychological sciences under an over-all and integrated plan of investigation."<sup>27</sup> Gillin betrays a naively unrealistic attitude as if detailing difficulties is a great help. Of course, they are not insuperable for man, and yet, he himself later writes, "To date no large urban exhibits of modern culture have been studied by this method. . . . Even a moderate sized community or small city requires the services of a considerable number of investigators, and the anthropologist who has been used to working with a small tribe, finds himself incapable of covering all aspects of the culture of a modern community in any reasonable length of time."<sup>28</sup> Though it was written by Gillin in 1949, to the best of the present writer's knowledge, the situation is no better after the lapse of nearly a decade. Perhaps Gorer's questionnaire study of English character is about the most in this direction. When not insuperable difficulties remain unsolved, they not only invite but compel reflection. Although Gillin has referred to the element of time, the full implication of this aspect of difficulty is brought out by Solon T. Kimball: "Some of the other practical problems may be observed by examining the history of any one of several community studies. These have been relatively costly, have often required the services of a sizable staff, and have extended over a considerable time-span. The task of collating, interpreting, and preparing for publication the immense data which inevitably accumulate under such ambitious enterprises is itself a major undertaking. . . . For example, fully a decade elapsed between the initiation and publication of the first report of the Yankee City study."<sup>29</sup> It is the American writers who insist on this method and who, true to their national character, believe practical difficulties to be resolvable. But unfortunately, national character studies in United States have been

<sup>27</sup> *American Anthropologist*, 51, 1949, p. 397.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 397-8.

<sup>29</sup> Problems of Studying American Culture, *American Anthropologist*, 57, 1955, pp. 1132-33.

See David G. Mandelbaum, "The Study of Complex Civilisations" in *Yearbook of Anthropology*, 1955, pp. 203-225.

very much inspired (not to say, financed) by considerations of practical policy, sometimes of urgent nature (e.g., *And Keep Your Powder Dry* by Margaret Mead). Would research projects of such prolonged duration interest the policy-makers?

Besides, these long studies are implicitly tied up with the issue of change in national character (discussed later in this chapter). Not all writers are frank on this point but, it would appear, many tacitly believe in the changingness of national character. Therefore, longer the duration of study, larger the number of factors introduced and greater, consequently, is the need to go on revising the earlier formulations. It is now time that the theoretical literature of this developing branch should provide definite answers to these questions.

Discussing the two methods of studying national character, Ginsberg observes, "In any case, the study of national traits as revealed in its representative men must be supplemented by a study of the mentality of the people at large, especially as revealed in proverbs, folk-lore and especially in wit and humour."<sup>40</sup> He quotes with approval Baldwin's remark, "Understand English humour, and you have gone a long way to understanding the Englishman."<sup>41</sup> A little later, Ginsberg writes, "The indirect method of studying national characteristics by an analysis of the psychological basis of the collective achievements of peoples has undoubtedly proved more fruitful than the direct method based on the observation of individual behaviour."<sup>42</sup> And in his final summing up, he gets most categorical and forthright on the point: "First, the study of national character is to be approached *not through an investigation of individual differences*, but of the qualities manifested in the collective life of nations, their traditions and public policy."<sup>43</sup> (italics mine)

Other methods in the field must also be examined. Inkeles and Levinson state that national character research is faced with

<sup>40</sup> M. Ginsberg, National Character, *British Journal of Psychology*, 32, 1941-42, p. 180.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

the old but still widespread dilemma of extensity-intensity. "Extensive, technically rigorous study of a large sample within a feasible number of subject and personal manhours increases our ability to generalise, but limits the number and 'depth' of the variables that can be investigated. On the other hand, intensive, 'clinical' study of a small sample permits a psychologically more significant and complex analysis, but the generality of its findings must be established by large-scale investigation."<sup>44</sup> Projective techniques and clinical interviews are the two compromise solutions that have somewhat bridged the wide gap between extensity and intensity. Rorschach test has evoked great enthusiasm among experimental social psychologists and it has been used in many national character studies. The test has the great seeming merit of placing national character studies on a sound and reliable comparative basis. It gives the impression of arriving at objective appraisal of subjective content because of the standardised nature of the test. The objectivity of the test is, however, exaggerated since the experimenter has to interpret the reaction of the subject. In 1937, Gardner Murphy, who had himself administered this test in U.S.A., wrote, "... the methods of interpretation are essentially those of the artist—judgements are qualitative or subjective, even intuitive."<sup>45</sup> And, as recently as 1950, Klineberg remarks, "The Rorschach test must be regarded as a promising approach to the understanding of the total personality. It is unfortunate that its use demands considerable experience, and that no objective rules can be established for the easy guidance of prospective testers."<sup>46</sup> It is clear that to administer the Rorschach test is not like applying a thermometer to read the body heat.

The other compromise method is that of clinical interview. It is very dangerous to recommend this method universally, without emphasising the qualifications the interviewer must possess.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 903.

<sup>45</sup> G. Murphy, *Experimental Social Psychology*, p. 850.

<sup>46</sup> O. Klineberg, *Social Psychology*, p. 451.

<sup>47</sup> "In Sullivan's opinion the alertness this [interviewing] requires militates against note-taking; it is an alertness and self-control so intense—and, I would add, involving such complex ethical problems of manipulation of the other and the self—as to make meaningful interviewing the hardest sort of work." David Riesman in review of Harry Stack Sullivan's *The Psychiatric Interview*, *American Journal of Sociology*, LX, 1954-55, p. 412.

The danger of projection is always there in all inter-personal relationships but it becomes very real and for the quality of work very disastrous when the interview is to be of a clinical, diagnostic and interpretative nature, almost like a psychoanalytical sitting. Inkeles and Levinson mention with satisfaction the case of Kardiner giving "psychoanalytical interviews" to American Negroes: "...Kardiner and Ovesey present a psychologically meaningful portrayal of *modal* personalities of a quality not previously achieved in innumerable sociological and socio-psychological studies."<sup>48</sup> The quality, however, was attained, not necessarily because of the inherent merit in the method itself, but because of the long professional experience of Kardiner in psychoanalytic practice. In lesser hands, this method is capable of degenerating into something thoroughly unreliable. In ordinary interviews where pure informations have to be procured, the only problem of importance is to establish rapport. But when immediate and intuitive perception has to be gained for deeper understanding, the temptation of projection would be too great for research workers who are equipped only intellectually for this task. Discussing the problem of insight, Murphy observes, "That is one reason why psychiatric social workers have for a long time been convinced that the first attempt in understanding delinquent boys or drunken fathers or confused and frightened mothers is to undergo their own psychoanalysis, or in some other way to work through their own deep-level problems."<sup>49</sup> How great is the attraction of projection will be further proved from the following words of even such an ego-oriented psychoanalyst as Karen Horney: "Because of all these advantages this defence is frequent. The only point that should be added is not a criticism of the concept but a warning is needed not to interpret anything as projection without evidence and also to be meticulously careful in the search for the factors which are projected."<sup>50</sup> This method should, therefore, be selectively recommended and cautiously applied. That this is far from an

<sup>48</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>49</sup> G. Murphy, *Personality*, p. 660.

<sup>50</sup> K. Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, p. 26.

One great attraction of projection is that one can deny the presence of the desire in oneself by seeing it in somebody else. Of course, the whole process is unconscious and is undetected. The danger, therefore, is all the greater.

empty warning will be clear when one recalls that Geza Róheim questioned the competence of no less an authority than Malinowski in application of psychoanalytic method and characterised him as little more than an amateur in this field.

The existence of a national character should be proved or demonstrated *before* it is described or analysed, is a problem that cannot be easily settled. More often, the existence of national character is taken for granted, and then, analysis or description is attempted. Strictly theoretically, it is possible to maintain the distinction but in actual research, it is often lost. That cultures differ, and that each culture shapes the majority of its members in its own mould, is an assumption that may well have the status of an axiom in sociology. Why, then, is the doubt? Doubts have very often been created by the differences in the portraits of the same people by different authors. This makes for confusion. Another reason would be that stereotypes of peoples are built up and as soon as the actual behaviour of the people deviates from the stereotype, the doubt is cast, not on the correctness or otherwise of the particular stereotype but on the validity of the concept of national character itself. This problem is linked up with a unimodal or multimodal concept of national character. Stereotypes are obviously rigidly unimodal, suggesting an artificial unity, simplicity and homogeneity. Actual behaviour of any people is complex, variegated and not unoften, contradictory.

This last point brings us to a very real problem of national character. Inkeles and Levinson suggest that national character refers to relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are modal among the adult members of the society. While we fully agree with the importance of the enduring part of personality characteristics (for, its absence would imply lack of organisation), we would like to draw attention to the difficulty that is created if the enduring aspect is maintained as indispensable under all circumstances. At times, people do change so much and so quickly in their behaviour that to see any continuity or consistency is really not easy. Discussing this problem, Ginsberg quotes Clemenceau as saying, "The Englishman was noted for his calm, but English soldiers tended to be more hyste-

rical than others, the Americans were supposed to be so quick and they were so slow. The French were supposed to be gay and they were solemn."<sup>81</sup> One has to invoke here the unconscious to explain such contradictions. We are now familiar with the processes of repression, compensation and reaction formation. To keep in mind only the ambivalent nature of feeling would clear up many perplexingly confusing human situations that are rationally both unintelligible and irreconcilable. The internal organisation of human dispositions does not only mean putting the diverse components of personality into an ordered and regulated system but so often involves the suppression of some (or many). Under stress or in emergency, the normal regulatory system fails and the repressed component asserts itself. Very often, what emerges thus is quite the contrary of what had been manifest before. Such contradictions need not invite one to call national character an illusion, for *such contradictions are part of character*.<sup>82</sup> Though quoted by Ginsberg in a different context, one would like to reproduce the apt words of T. S. Eliot in this connection: "The admission of inconsistencies sometimes ridiculed as indifference to logic and coherence, of which the English mind is often accused, may be largely the admission of inconsistencies inherent in life itself and of the impossibility of overcoming them by the imposition of a uniformity greater than life will bear."<sup>83</sup> Enduringness is an aspect of character which is far from unimportant. But its occasional absence or reduction need not lead us to conclude that there is no character at all.

Discussing the question of more than one personality type in one culture, Inkeles and Levinson suggest that "a multimodal conception of national character would seem to be theoretically the most meaningful as well as empirically the most realistic."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>82</sup> "Patterns that are in apparent conflict with the master ideas of a society may not be in actual conflict when related to fundamental psychological drives. A surface disharmony from the sociological viewpoint may well be resolvable into a deeper psychological adjustment." E. Beaglehole, *A Note on Cultural Compensation, The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 33, 1938, p. 128.

<sup>83</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>84</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 982.

In an effort to bring out the theoretical meaningfulness of the multimodal concept, they further write, "By explicitly raising the issue of the number of modes present in a given society, it tends somewhat to counteract the inclination toward stereotyping and spurious homogenizing in our descriptions of national populations."<sup>55</sup> Otto Klineberg makes similar point when he writes, "One objection is that nations are not homogeneous. This is true; as a consequence we need distribution curves; studies of various regions within the nation, as well as of economic classes and other sub-groups, a comparison of similar classes in different nations as well as of different classes in the same nations."<sup>56</sup> These ideals of research are doubtless laudable and no one can have any proper quarrel with them. But they are pitched so high that one wonders if they are realisable in the foreseeable future. Discussing the methods of testing out the validity of the swaddling hypothesis of Gorer for culture and personality studies, Mead suggests that only a rigorous cross-cultural comparison of this practice is likely to yield data that may be used for universal generalization. But she soon adds, "It is important to stress that we have no such information on any single aspect of child rearing, and it is likely to be a very long time before the time and money are available to make such a study."<sup>57</sup> (Compare this with the easy optimism of Gillin.)

In no way an attempt to approximate even moderately to this lofty and comprehensive ideal, a chapter is devoted to the comparison of the Hindus and the Chinese in the present work. This was possible entirely due to the excellent way in which Lin Yutang has abstracted the main strands of the Chinese character. But for the specific mention of the traits and the treatment of each, even this limited comparison could not have been attempted. The comparison, however, is not undertaken for the purpose of demonstrating the sources of differences but only to highlight the exact nature of differences. It was possible to compare the various institutions of the two societies, particularly the family

<sup>55</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 982.

<sup>56</sup> O. Klineberg, A Science of National Character, *Journal of Social Psychology*, 19, 1944, p. 159.

<sup>57</sup> M. Mead, The Swaddling Hypothesis: Its Reception, *American Anthropologist*, 56, 1954, p. 899.

and/or the child rearing practices and relate them to the resulting differences in the ethos of the two cultures and the character of the peoples. This would have involved too much of comparison and the delineation of the Hindus themselves would have somewhat suffered. The present study being confined to the Hindus, the Chinese were employed as background material against which the Hindus would appear in clearer relief. It is easy to present two contrasting cultures and bring out their sharp differences. But it is certainly less revealing. Though less easy, it is much more rewarding to compare two such cultures that are far from contrasting and yet have important differences between them. Not the glaring and obvious but the subtle and concealed differences are thereby revealed. "Indeed, national temperaments evidently become most distinctive when peoples are contrasted whose cultures are basically alike: such as Frenchmen, British, Germans, Scandinavians, Spaniards, whose cultures are only subvarieties of the general European phase of occidental civilisation. By contrast, to compare French national character with Chinese, or Italian with Japanese, seems random and somewhat futile."<sup>24</sup> More than any other people in Asia, the Chinese are perhaps best suited for this purpose with regard to the Hindus in India.

Inkeles and Levinson mention a few very promising leads for comparative study of cultures. But these leads could as well be employed for the purpose of describing even a single culture. They suggest that one concentrate on a limited number of psychological issues, like aggression or orality. They go on to mention the specific psychological issues that could serve as basis for comparison:

- (i) Relation to authority.
- (ii) Conception of self.
- (iii) Basis for maintaining inner equilibrium.
- (iv) Major forms of anxiety.
- (v) Primary dilemmas and conflicts and ways of dealing with them.

<sup>24</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 591.

A problem of importance that has not been considered worthy of even mention by Inkeles and Levinson in their lengthy article is that of permanence or continuity of national character. This neglect could be justified only if it is proved that continuity of national character has nothing to do with the existence of national character.<sup>50</sup> But this is far from being the case. Writers have not hesitated to call the concept of national character an illusion, mainly on the charge that it lacks consistency or continuity. Madariaga has pointed out that the fact of the same people having different reputations at different times has been the favourite argument of those who want to deny the existence of national character. Madariaga's own answer is doubtless witty, "Well what of it? As if a character could exist without changing or change without existing."<sup>51</sup> But the fact remains that if a character changes too much or too often, it invites doubts about its own existence. Clearly, the problem must be faced more squarely. Since national character studies belong to culture and personality field, it may not be inappropriate to begin with the consideration of culture.

Does culture change rapidly or is it stable? The answer lies between the two, but it is more towards stability than change. Fully aware of the openness or receptivity of a culture, Kroeber yet maintains that even at a time when innovation is at its highest, what is transmitted exceeds many times more what is created: "Historians would be unanimous, for instance, that with all the important changes produced by the great French Revolution, France of 1750 and France of 1820 nevertheless still were far more alike than different. It would take a series of revolutions, or a quite long series of generations, before the changes equalled the persistence."<sup>52</sup> (Only equalled, not exceeded.) Kroeber offers a very understandable reason for such a high degree of persistence: it offers its members a sense of security, stability and repose. (And human beings want these more than anything else.) If this is true that the total content of culture does not change much, it is a fair supposition that the carriers of a culture also

<sup>50</sup> The word 'continuity' is preferred to permanence in this context. Permanence suggests a rigid unchangingness which is inappropriate.

<sup>51</sup> S. Madariaga, *The Portrait of Europe*, p. 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 256.

do not change much. Employing this basic postulate of social continuity of anthropology, Gorer writes, "This carries the implication that the characters and the predispositions of the new recruits to the society do not differ in any marked or consistent degree from those whose ranks they join or whose places they fill."<sup>42</sup> Gorer has again dealt with this problem in his study of the English character. It is interesting to note that he advances a hypothesis about the techniques by which the national character of a society may be modified over a length of time; specifically, he deals with the psychological rôle of the police in England. But, as a matter of actual estimate on the continuity of English character, Gorer observes, "I would make the assumption that fundamentally English character has changed very little in the last 150 years, and possibly longer; . . . Underlying the enormous superficial changes, I believe that there is a basic historical continuity."<sup>43</sup>

Barker mentions Hume as taking the view that national character changes considerably from one age to another but he himself writes, "When we reflect on what Hume forgot, or failed to guess, we may also reflect that the depths of national character have a steady constancy. Much may change on the surface, as the exposed summit of an iceberg may melt, and even dislodge whole blocks which fall into the forgetting sea. But, just as it has been calculated that only one-ninth of an iceberg appears above the surface, so it may also be agreed that the great mass of national character rides as it were underseas, with a steady permanence. . . . The British of the year A.D. 2000 are not likely to be signally different from the British of the year A.D. 1900."<sup>44</sup> When writers as unrelated as Gorer and Barker write the same language, it almost compels conviction.

The preceding argument was from the point of view of culture persistence or social stability. It is possible to argue the continuity of national character from the point of view of individual psychology too. From the persistence of culture, it would appear that the ideals of the people do not change either easily or quickly

<sup>42</sup> G. Gorer in *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, p. 62.

<sup>43</sup> G. Gorer, *Exploring English Character*, p. 286.

<sup>44</sup> E. Barker, *National Character*, p. xiii.

or very much. Conscience or super-ego is the repository of the ideals. And the transmission of super-ego is much greater than is commonly imagined. J. C. Flugel makes the point that parents adopt the attitude of their own super-ego towards their children as though they said to them, "Do as I say, not as I do." The distinction between the ideal and the actual is firmly grasped by the parents and they want their children to be, not what they themselves are, but what they would have liked themselves to be. "In this way there takes place something in the nature of a direct transmission of the super-ego from one generation to another, comparable perhaps to the continuity of the germ-plasm in its pilgrimage through a succession of individual bodies."<sup>55</sup> "The result is that the super-ego of the child is not really built up on the model of the parents, but on that of the parents' super-ego; it takes over the same content, it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the age-long values which have been handed down in this way from generation to generation."<sup>56</sup> Although the super-ego of the child is not a complete prototype of the parental super-ego, it yet provides ample source of continuity. "In the psychology of all peoples there is a certain permanent basis which makes itself constantly felt."<sup>57</sup> Writing about McDougall's *Group Mind*, Allport approvingly remarks: "He found these fulfilled most clearly in the case of nations, for nations have a permanent and highly organised character."<sup>58</sup>

The above stand is further supported by the type of evidence that Kroeber has collected in his *Anthropology* and to which a reference has already been made earlier in a different context. To quote again the same notable examples:

(i) "More than eighteen hundred years ago Tacitus gave to posterity one of the masterpieces of this genre in his analysis of German custom and character. So keen was his penetration that many qualities of his subjects are still recognisable in the Germans of today."<sup>59</sup> and

<sup>55</sup> J. C. Flugel, *Man, Morals and Society*, p. 76.

<sup>56</sup> S. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, p. 90.

<sup>57</sup> Andre Siegfried, *The Character of Peoples*, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> Gordon W. Allport, "The Historical Background of Modern Social Psychology" in Gardner Lindzey (Ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. I, p. 89.

<sup>59</sup> p. 817.

(ii) in 1789, Immanuel Kant published his last work, *Anthropologie*, one of the final sections of which deals with the character of people. Kant had attempted characterisation of Germans; about its accuracy Kroeber writes, "This was written more than a century and a half ago, when Germany was politically divided and impotent; but even after World War II most of it is still a surprisingly happy diagnosis."<sup>70</sup>

This is as much a tribute to the extraordinary insight of Tacitus and Kant as a confirmation of the continuity of national character.

The question of the continuity or otherwise of Hindu character has been left unexplored. In view of the evidences produced above, it would appear that the assumption of the continuity of Hindu character is not unwarrantable.

Of all the theories of personality, psychoanalytic has dominated the field of personality and culture approach. "Psychoanalytic theory is in fact the major existing body of hypotheses about personality development, and it is not surprising that it has been used in the development of generalised knowledge about culture and personality."<sup>71</sup> Ribble, who made clinical observations on a large group of infants, 600 in number, for a long-period of time, writes, "The general principles in Freud's theory of development are well established. They have received confirmation from study of primitive peoples (Freud, 1940b; Roheim, 1934; M. Mead, 1935; Money-Kyrle, 1939). They have also received confirmation from the psychoanalytic study of children (See A Freud, 1928, 1937, Klein, 1932) and they are gradually being incorporated as part of the working conception of personality development by those outside psychoanalytical circles (See Chapter 3 by Mowrer and Kluckhohn)."<sup>72</sup> She further observes, "Our findings from direct clinical observation of babies tend to confirm orthodox psychoanalytical theory."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 586.

<sup>71</sup> J. W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child, *Child Training and Personality*, p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> M. A. Ribble, "Infantile Experience In Relation to Personality Development" in J. McV. Hunt (Ed.), *Personality and the Behaviour Disorders*, Vol. II, p. 627.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 647.

Strangely enough, the caractereology of Freud himself (and of Karl Abraham and Ernest Jones) has not played the most important part; it is the neo-Freudians who have provided the major framework. Fromm has taken care to show where and at what exact points his stand differs from that of Freud's. Fromm rejects Freud's instinctivistic view of human nature: "Contrary to Freud's view point, the analysis offered in this is based on the assumption that the key problem in psychology is that of specific kind of relatedness of the individual towards the world and not that of satisfaction or frustration of this or that instinctual need *per se*."<sup>74</sup> But, what gives rise to the need of the individual to relate himself to the world and would he still do that without the tension of instincts? Conceding only a few common needs like hunger, thirst and sex, Fromm further writes, "The most beautiful as well as the most ugly inclinations of man are not part of a fixed and biologically given human nature, but result from the social process which creates man. In other words, society has not only a suppressing function—although it has that too—but it has also a creative function."<sup>75</sup> It is certainly very eloquent in praise of society but it reduces the individual to nothingness. Although he warns that "in trying to avoid the errors of biological and metaphysical concepts we must not succumb to an equally grave error, that of a sociological relativism in which man is nothing but a puppet, directed by the strings of social circumstances,"<sup>76</sup> the warning is in vain. If there is no fixed and biologically given human nature and, if society is not only suppressive but also creative of man, is one far from taking the stand of social relativism, even though it be only implied?<sup>77</sup> Fromm's faith is "in some kind of a mystic element which, left to its spontaneous development, would make for sound adjustment and human happiness."<sup>78</sup> As against Fromm's opposition to Freud's instinctivistic orientation, Gardner

<sup>74</sup> E. Fromm, *The Fear of Freedom*, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247.

<sup>77</sup> "The heavy overlaying of original or basic human nature by influences proceeding from the individual's life history and from his culture results in a rather remarkable anomaly; Psychologists have become very unwilling to discuss the inherent psychic nature of man. It is definitely unfashionable to do so." Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 619.

<sup>78</sup> K. Young, *Personality and Its Problems of Adjustment*, p. 276.

Murphy has the following to remark on the subject: "In considering the dependence of the individual upon society, a trap lies ready for us. We have inherited from John Locke and his school the concept that man is molded by society. The word 'molded' is ambiguous. Locke's followers, even until Darwin's time, thought of man as being like wax, shaped from the outside by forces alien to his nature. Just as Locke regarded the newborn child as "White paper" written on by experience, so some people, even today, think as passively molded and making no response to the process of molding. *Darwin and more particularly Freud, have shown how far from correct this idea is.* For the individual reaches out, makes demands; he can love terrifically, fear terrifically, and therefore hate terrifically. *With a view to the deep biology of the individual, we have begun to grasp the fact that society does not impose its norms upon individual existence.* Man is not passive in relation to these pressures; he reaches out, accepts, rejects, compromises, integrates."<sup>10</sup> (italics mine) It is regretted that to give Freud his due, the corrective to Fromm has to be supplied by Murphy.

Ego-orientation of psychoanalysis in itself was not undesirable. (Anna Freud deplored the neglect of ego in the earlier stages of psychoanalysis.) But the process has gone on in a way where the most important part of contribution, viz., the unconscious, is under-rated and ego-adjustment is increasingly emphasised. To appreciate fully the importance of the unconscious in the field of motivation would mean the realisation of the tremendous complications involved. Human mind becomes far from a neat and simple arrangement. In the main, insights to the unconscious will have to be intuitively gained. However urgently it might be demanded that psychoanalytical concepts should be restated in testable form, this condition is not likely to be ever completely fulfilled. Psychoanalysis does not bear out demonstration in the manner it is desired. Deep analysis of a large number of any population is not easily possible. The generalisations will have to be from a few to the many. It seems that psychoanalytical writers in the personality and culture field may

<sup>10</sup> G. Murphy, *Personality*, p. 768.

never find it possible to fulfil those standards of research which other social scientists wish to impose upon others and themselves.

One decisive influence of psychoanalysis has been the importance the period of childhood has come to receive as the formative stage in life. "What the last thirty years of psychological work have disclosed is the unexpected extent and subtlety of early influences, their enduring character, and something of the way in which they work. On this topic there has been a convergence of evidence from clinical psychology, child psychology, anthropology and animal psychology."<sup>20</sup> In a vague way, childhood was known to be important. Did not Wordsworth call child the father of man? But, not till psychoanalysis did people realise how much of a father a child is. The period of childhood not only came to be regarded as important but decisive in the extreme. The foundations of personality are so laid in the childhood that any possibility of a fundamental change as a natural, automatic process is ruled out. Childhood acquired a determinism never suspected before.

But, not all seem to be convinced of the determining aspect of childhood for future personality. Inkeles and Levinson appear to belong to this group. They devote considerable space to the discussion of the overwhelming importance the period of childhood has come to acquire. They would like to find out if the experiences of the intervening years, i.e., between childhood and adulthood, are also not of decisive importance. And, although not stated explicitly, it would appear, they think that such intervening experiences are important.

The crucial importance of the early experiences is derived from the fact that basic orientations are established during that period. Later experiences may be important but they never touch the self directly. They reach the self only after they have been filtered through the already established basic orientations. "The early expectations are largely unconscious and will persist for a very long while in spite of conflicting experiences at the conscious level."<sup>21</sup> Starting with Marquesan example, Murphy goes

<sup>20</sup> D. W. Harding, *Social Psychology and Individual Values*, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

on to generalise: "The infantile feeling tone apparently has set the stage for later attitudes in the adult personality including the food attitudes and perhaps much else besides. It may be that what actually happens in every human society is that the manner in which the young first come to experience life paves the way to the manner of experiencing adult life. Infantile joys and sorrows, their sequelæ and derivatives, can perhaps become central in the personality structure that is to be."<sup>11</sup> The adult personality may change as a result of what has happened in the intervening years but within the limits laid down by childhood experiences. The objection is perhaps raised by those who are unduly impressed by the ego-component of personality. As the part of mind that is in touch with the objective reality, the ego is the most adjustable, changing part. But the unconscious id impulses remain unchanged. Is it not remarkable that the ego should be seen but the unconscious denied? (It is noteworthy that Inkeles and Levinson have not mentioned once the importance of the unconscious.) It is lamentably pre-Freudian for any advanced student of the subject today. It sounds rather unperceptive of the authors to complain of the serious neglect the political system, patterns of economic organisation, media of mass communication, etc. have suffered as factors in the formation of modal personality. The concept of modal personality seems to be all inclusive. Gorer well answers this charge of ignoring the influence of history, economics, geography and similar impersonal phenomena by saying that a study of national character is not meant to describe all the phenomena of a nation's life but to isolate and describe the main motives of the majority of the population.<sup>12</sup>

It would not be incorrect to say that the full importance of the rôle even of parents in the growing child's mind came to be recognised only after psychoanalysis. In a way, the importance of parents was always known. Heroes would be described and some would confess as having been deeply influenced by their parents. But the exact manner in which the influence was exercised was not clear. Often, it would be shown as bene-

<sup>11</sup> G. Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 800.

<sup>12</sup> G. Gorer and J. Rickman, *The Peoples of Great Russia*, p. 202.

ficial, elevating, greatness-producing.<sup>54</sup> There was no anticipation of the numerous complex ways in which the personalities of the parents, *real and imaginary*, are now shown by psychoanalysis to affect decisively the character of a growing child. There is now not only the idea that the child consciously emulates the example of the parents but what is much more, by his unconscious identification and introjection, he cannot help being influenced by his parents in a variety of ways, both good and bad.<sup>55</sup>

It is, thus, clear that the period of childhood is not only important but highly complicated. The oral, the anal, the phallic and the genital are the four developmental stages that Freud outlined. In the culture and personality approach, the oral and the anal, as the earlier stages, have received greater importance. The variation in the duration of breast feeding and the abruptness of weaning, and the harshness or indulgence with which toilet training is imposed on the unwilling child, have been the major leads followed. In spite of this vogue, it is suggested that only practising psychoanalysts, interested in personality and culture research, should investigate these practices, with a view to showing its impact on personality.<sup>56</sup> Unconscious phantasies play an unsuspectedly important part and it is well-known that mere acquaintance with psychoanalytic literature is not likely to impart any valuable insight into the unconscious. (This is, of course, for those who fundamentally accept psychoanalysis. Those who do not, their arguments would proceed very differently.) It seems that such anthropological writers who are interested in psychoanalytical approach, can dispense with a very close, detailed and exclusive study of weaning and toilet training and yet make their observations sufficiently rich and rewarding. For example, in

<sup>54</sup> "No wonder they say geniuses mostly have great mothers." D. H. Lawrence, quoted by J. Middleton Murry, *Love, Freedom and Society*, p. 64.

<sup>55</sup> "The role of the mother in maintaining an orderly rhythm in sucking, in eliminating, in general bodily movement and comfort, and in the basic feelings of orientation and security, all of which comes from adequate handling and fondling, is fundamental for emotional and social development as well as for physiological control." M. A. Ribble, *op. cit.*, p. 647.

<sup>56</sup> "This study and many others of a similar kind to follow raise an unpleasant issue. Can this kind of synthesis be undertaken by any but those skilled in psychodynamics? The answer is unequivocally 'No.'" Abraham Kardiner in review of Laura Thompson and Alice Joseph's *The Hopi Way*, *American Journal of Sociology*, 52, 1946, p. 68.

her study of Balinese character, Mead does not give exclusive attention to weaning and toilet training. She emphasises more the emotional relationship between the mother and the child and the heartless way in which the mother repeatedly frustrates the child right when she has roused him to expect a great deal of affection and petting from her: "The mother continually stimulates the child to show emotion—love or desire, jealousy or anger—only to turn away, to break the thread, as the child in rising passion makes a demand for some emotional response on her part."<sup>77</sup> It is this repeated frustration of the rising crescendo in the child that splits his emotions and turns him into a schizoid. "The mother and others tease and tantalise while the child responds with mounting emotion which is invariably undercut before the climax. Later, the child begins to withdraw. . . . And once established, his unresponsiveness will last through life."<sup>78</sup> In her study of the Japanese character, Ruth Benedict, too, has not adopted an approach too much in terms of weaning and toilet training. It is the whole gamut of experiences of the growing child that is taken into account. In the hands of a non-psychoanalyst, it is a much safer approach.

For reasons mentioned above, it was thought advisable not to give great importance to weaning and toilet training practices. Besides, it needs field work to ascertain the uniformity or variation in the system that is followed throughout the Hindu society. The published data on the rearing of Hindu children is far from adequate. And, yet, the period of childhood as a factor in the character formation of adult Hindu could not be overlooked in the light of modern psychology. The little published information on children, plus the fact that the writer himself has been brought up in a Hindu family, have together been utilized here.

India is a vast expanse of land and the Hindus are spread out all over the country. There are various regional and linguistic groups within this extensive territory. Each such regional and linguistic group has a more marked homogeneity within itself. Besides, Hindu society is caste-patterned and the caste structure

<sup>77</sup> G. Bateson and M. Mead, *The Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*, p. 32.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

is a hierarchical organisation. Traditionally and in its original simplicity, not only functions were allotted to each caste but certain moral and mental qualities were also associated with each. Though belonging to the same religion, members of different castes yet differ. The difference goes deeper than the occupation and presumably, there was difference in disposition too. For example, a Kshatriya is permitted much more of aggression than a Brahmin if the latter is permitted any at all. The lines that perceptibly separate the Hindus are three in number: (i) region, (ii) language, and (iii) caste (of which the first two generally overlap). In a group such as this, there is no possibility of a single prevailing personality type. A really comprehensive and thorough-going study of the Hindus must include all such variations. It was clearly not possible for this study to attempt such a formidable task. But the writer is not altogether without a broader, inter-regional perspective. To his own personal background of an eastern state was added the experience of the cosmopolitan city of Bombay for a number of years. The city draws its population from almost all parts of the country. Nor was the institution of his research without its cosmopolitan composition, where longer acquaintances and closer friendships revealed more unobtrusively the diverse ways of different regions. The writer knows that the scientific worth of this is nil and yet it is mentioned for what it is worth.

The writer does not know a word of Sanskrit and some might think, it is disqualification enough for a work of the nature attempted here. On examination, it does not appear to be as valid an objection. The writer is not an alien in Hindu society and if he does not know Sanskrit, by far the overwhelming majority of Hindus do not know it today. Why should, then, Sanskrit be regarded as an indispensable tool for a student of Hindu society? Only because the sacred books were written originally in Sanskrit? But the primary interest here is not in the sacred books, it is in the people. To understand Hindus, knowledge of Sanskrit is far from indispensable if people themselves do not read their sacred books in that language. Besides, there are translations. A foreigner may be in the danger of accepting the translation and yet missing the feel of the subject. A native of the culture does not suffer from the same handicap. And, then,

is the feel of the subject so exclusively in the language as not to be sensed in the content at all? Why should it be that a good translation kills all the fragrance and presents only a corpse of a living thing? The writer is even inclined to think that not to know Sanskrit is not without its own important advantage. One is under much less compulsion to defend, to exalt and to treat everything sacred with a reverential surrender.

The Hindus are an old and complex people. It is by no means an easy task to understand and explain them. It is much easier either to condemn or to idealise them and they provide enough grounds for both. Whatever the value of this study, neither of these two motives have been allowed to operate. Advantage has been taken of the fact that the writer was born and brought up as a Hindu but care was taken to avoid its danger (although it was no easy task to do so). Often there were moods of despair and Hindu character would assume a mysterious elusiveness, too difficult to unravel and to put in words. With regard to the Hindus, the writer's feeling has often been the same as that of Walter Lippman's towards God in Whitehead's philosophy: "Unhappily, I am not enough of a logician to say that I am quite sure I understand what it means to say that "God is not concrete, but He is the ground for concrete actuality." There have been moments when I imagined I had caught the meaning of this, but there have been more moments when I knew that I had not."<sup>22</sup> The present work is the result of such moments when the writer felt that he had understood the Hindus.

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<sup>22</sup> *A Preface to Morals*, p. 26. Even Barker confesses to such diffidence.

## CHAPTER II

"In spite of many gradations within each of these groups, the predominantly Ideational and Pseudo-Ideational character of most of the Oriental, especially the Hindu, and the conspicuously Sensate character of most of the contemporary Western societies, is indubitable and remains probably the fundamental difference between them."

—P. A. SOROKIN,

*Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. I, p. 111.

"The difference between Western, Indian, and Far Eastern civilizations obviously consists of more than a diversity of content as exemplified by items of the order of eating with forks, fingers, and chopsticks respectively. Beyond these concrete facts, there is a pervading difference of character and outlook in the three cultures. That is what is meant by ethos."

—A. L. KROEBER,

*Anthropology*, p. 294.

## ETHOS OF CULTURE

Man has wavered between two extremes: Is there a fundamental unity or a fundamental diversity in the human race? In different moods, he has accepted different answers. At times, the similarity of man the world over impresses him; at other times, the local differences even within a small tract of land perplex him. This confusion arises when traits are isolated from their cultural contexts, and their real meaning is lost. An isolated trait may be found to have a widespread distribution, emphasising thereby the unity of mankind. But, since these traits have different meanings in the total patterning of different cultures, diversity is equally suggested. Diversity of culture is today an accepted fact. By making a study of three simple peoples, the Zunis, the Kwakiutls, and the Dobus, Benedict succeeded in bringing out the spectacular diversity of the three cultures. Mentioning other attempts of similar nature by Mead and Gorer, Kroeber remarks that "...the most comprehensive procedure has been that of Benedict."<sup>1</sup> And Radhakamal Mukerjee has observed, "Ruth Benedict characterises types of American Indian cultures as Apollonian and Dionysian with differences in dominant values and in the cultural imperatives that mould and govern behaviour and personality. Though the psychological characterisation of a whole people by a stereotype, or catch-phrase is neither scientific nor truly objective, Ruth Benedict's method of defining the cultural norms as the frame of reference for analysing or interpreting a culture as an integral whole has now won wide recognition and scientific support."<sup>2</sup> Publication

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *The Social Structure of Values*, p. 252.

of *Patterns of Culture* was a major event in the field of culture and personality studies. Benedict, however, had a great advantage, which she herself has acknowledged, in that the cultures she studied were integrated around a single psychological trend. Modern cultures are too complex for any such thorough-going integration. Discussing this limitation of Benedict's approach, Kroeber hopefully remarks, "But it seems much more likely that every culture is psychologically characterizable; and that if only a few can be appropriately labelled, it is because our assortment of labels is inadequate, or our interest flags beyond the gaudy ones. Psychologists do not deny a personality to individuals who are complex, balanced and well-rounded, or allow it only to those who have warped themselves around a single impulse or idea. The same must hold for the personalities of cultures. Some will be more decisively one-sided than others. But all must have a psychological physiognomy of some kind corresponding to their cultural physiognomy."<sup>3</sup> Despite this encouraging observation of Kroeber, the fact remains that notwithstanding an "adequate assortment of labels", delineation of a complex culture is decidedly very difficult because of its many-sidedness.

Sorokin's is perhaps the most complete attempt to analyse and assemble the various complex cultures of the world into a few thematic patterns. He begins by positing two main categories of Ideational and Sensate and soon adds the third, Idealistic. As one would expect, Sorokin admits: "The probability is that neither the Ideational nor the Sensate type has ever existed in its pure form: but all integrated cultures have in fact been composed of divers combination of these two pure logico-meaningful forms."<sup>4</sup> Cultures of the world could lie anywhere between the two extremes of ideational and sensate. The different degrees in which these two contrasting ethos are brought together in different cultures constitute not only a quantitative but a qualitative problem.

One of the first cultures Sorokin examines under 'Ascetic Ideational Mentality' is Hindu culture. He argues that since

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>4</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. I, p. 67.

Ascetic Idealism is possible only for a few, Hindu cultures and other such cultures, "realizing that it is attainable only by the few, . . . admit for the mass of their adherents either the Active Ideational, or the Idealistic, or a Mixed mentality of a less Sensate sort."<sup>6</sup> Although Sorokin makes this general proviso, he goes on to write about the Hindus: "Thus, not all are expected to have an ascetic mentality and conduct. In spite of this, however, in each of these stations the central idea—that the Ascetic Ideational mentality and conduct are the highest and the only forms having worth, goes through and through the whole culture, including its lower mentality forms. It characterizes the former and controls the latter."<sup>6</sup> In sharp contrast to the above is the Sensate culture. "This type of mentality is quite familiar to us. As we shall see, it pervades our contemporary culture."<sup>7</sup> Its examples are so abundant that Sorokin remarks, "This type of mentality and examples of it in history are so well-known, it is so common in this age, that no further commentary is necessary here."<sup>8</sup> Explaining how the two values express themselves, Sorokin elaborates: "The first group [Sensate] has a much more luxurious standard of material well-being, satisfies more bountifully its material needs, displays great power in modifying the material environment, has more efficiency in its business and greater knowledge and control of external phenomena and processes, and is (as we shall see) conspicuously "worldly" in its culture patterns and aspirations. The second group [Ideational] is obliged to bridle many of its most urgent material needs; it displays much less external activity in transforming the material world; and in the heart of its integrated culture still remains predominantly Ideational, as is shown by its passivity and its religious, philosophical, mystical, moral and æsthetic *Weltanschauung*. But it is backward in the knowledge of the material world, of material technique, of economics, and there-

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

*Cf.* "That the picture of a chaotic moral universe of peoples of different regions and races is somewhat over-simply and uncritically drawn by historical sociology is borne in the writings of Max Scheler, Giddings, Sorokin and Ginsberg, among others." Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Dynamics of Morals*, p. 5.

See further criticism of Sorokin's treatment by Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Social Structure of Values*, pp. 156-158.

fore far less able to control inorganic and organic material forces and processes than the first group."<sup>9</sup> Even if Radhakamal Mukerjee's criticism of quantitateness be correct, one must admit that Sorokin's attempt is doubtless one of the best. The above quotation gives a vivid idea of what the typical culture would be if it were predominantly Sensate or Ideational. In the writer's opinion, Hindu pride is hurt at what is contained in the last sentence of the above quotation. A very ambivalent attitude to such charges is displayed. When religiosity and other-worldiness are mentioned in a complimentary sense by Western scholars, it is gulped down all too willingly. But when weaknesses inherent in these qualities or consequent upon these qualities are referred to, elaborate attempts are made to refute these 'charges'. (And it is well to remember that each strength has its own weak side.)

There is overwhelming evidence to show that the main interest and contribution of the East and the West has differed substantially to posit something like a Western and an Eastern mind. In his valuable book, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Radhakrishnan observes, "Religion, however, has been the master passion of the Hindu mind, a lamp unto its feet and a light unto its path, the pre-supposition and basis of its civilisation, the driving force of its culture, and the expression—in spite of its tragic failures, inconsistencies, divisions, and degradations—of its life in God."<sup>10</sup> It is not for nothing that almost all the religions of the world have originated in the East. Even Christianity which is mainly followed in the West is Asian in origin and Dixon has remarked (quoted elsewhere in this work) that it is not Christianity, originally an Eastern ascetic creed that has transformed Europe but the other way about. Aristotle in the distant past and Huntington in the contemporary period have remarked on the lack of physical vigour in Asian peoples. Hindu culture as also other Asian cultures would seem to be more contemplative or meditative than given to action.<sup>11</sup> Swami

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup> See "Eastern And Western Ideals of Happiness" in Bertrand Russell, *Sceptical Essays*, pp. 99-108; "Western Civilisation" in his *In Praise of Idleness*, pp. 157-175.

Akhilanand argues in his book *Hindu Psychology* that while the East is drawn to contemplation and meditation, the West expresses itself in action; Allport supports this thesis in his preface to the book. "From the beginning of her history India has adored and idealised, not soldiers and statesmen, not men of science and leaders of industry, not even poets and philosophers, but those rarer and chastened spirits, whose greatness lies in what they are and not in what they do; . . ."<sup>12</sup> This description of Radhakrishnan agrees well with Sorokin's elaboration of Ideational culture.

Contrasting the Eastern with the Western culture, Radhakrishnan writes, "The Greeks laid the foundations of natural science for the European world. To analyse and explore, to test and prove all things in the light of reason, was the ambition of the Greek mind . . . . The Greeks were the first to attempt to make life rational, to ask what is the right life for man and to apply the principles of reason and order to the chaos of primitive beliefs."<sup>13</sup> Reason and its application for human betterment was the master passion of the Greeks. This resulted in a cheerfulness of temperament and an abiding zest for life which is hard to come across in Hindu thought. "To rejoice in life, to find the world beautiful and delightful to live in, was a mark of the Greek spirit which distinguished it from all that had gone before. It is a vital distinction."<sup>14</sup> And again, "But never, not in their darkest moments, do they lose their taste for life. It is always a wonder and a delight, the world a place of beauty, and they themselves rejoicing to be alive in it."<sup>15</sup> Supremacy of reason and an unbending instinct-to-live naturally led the Greeks to give thought to the improvement of the environment. "Greek civilisation was a magnificent achievement of the human reason and it was by no means one-sided. The Greek inheritance has enabled the West to remake the world. Earth, sea, and air have been made to yield to the service of man."<sup>16</sup> Far more cate-

<sup>12</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way to Western Civilisation*, p. 17; see pp. 7-87 of this book for a general discussion of the contrast.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

gorically does Fisher state, "It is, moreover, to European man that the world owes the incomparable gifts of modern science. To the conquest of nature through knowledge the contributions made by Asiatics have been negligible and by Africans (Egyptians excluded) non-existent. . . . It is hardly excessive to say that the material fabric of modern civilized life is the result of the intellectual daring and tenacity of the European peoples."<sup>17</sup> The present writer is aware that at this point a violent protest is possible. Although Fisher acknowledges the debt in scientific field to Babylon and Egypt, he does not mention India: "Yet this astounding supremacy in the field of scientific discovery has not always existed and may not always continue. . . . Europe has not always been the tutor, nor Asia always the pupil. There was a time when these relations were reversed, and the men of Europe (the land of the setting sun) were deeply influenced by the far older and more sumptuous civilisations of Babylon and Egypt."<sup>18</sup> Without passing in review the various achievements of Hindu science, it may safely be asserted that scientific achievements in India have been neither of recent origin nor of ordinary quality. "The Romans of the Imperial epoch regarded the Indians as a nation of industrial experts, whose manufactures and enterprise in trade were well-known to countries like Egypt, Persia, etc."<sup>19</sup> The mathematical achievements of the Hindus are well-known by now. But, in spite of these attainments, the fact remains that science in India has not been applied to master nature and to improve human existence in the manner in which the West has done. And there the two cultures reveal their characteristic bent. Radhakrishnan declares, "On the whole, the Eastern civilisations are interested not so much in improving the actual conditions as in making the best of this imperfect world, in developing the qualities of cheerfulness and contentment, patience and endurance. They are not happy in the prospect of combat. To desire little, to quench the eternal fires, has been their aim. . . . While the Western races crave for freedom even at the price of conflict, the Easterns stoop to peace even at the

<sup>17</sup> H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> B. B. Dey in S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western*, p. 465. See Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, pp. 520-532.

price of subjection."<sup>20</sup> To the charge of the West that India has failed politically, he confessedly writes, "All the same, Indian culture has failed to give political expression to its ideals. The importance of wealth and power to give expression to spirit, though theoretically recognised, was not practically realised. India has suffered for this negligence."<sup>21</sup> Radhakrishnan has acknowledged this deficiency of Eastern ethos time and again: "The Chinese and the Hindu civilisations are not great in the high qualities which have made the youthful nations of the West the dynamic force they have been on the arena of world history, the qualities of ambition and adventure, of nobility and courage, of public spirit and social enthusiasm."<sup>22</sup> "The qualities associated with the Eastern cultures make for life and stability; those characteristics of the West for progress and adventure."<sup>23</sup>

Albert Schweitzer writes that world and life affirmation appeals to the European because of his instinctive will-to-live. According to Schweitzer, one of the difficulties that a Western enquirer faces in understanding India is the fact of the world and life negation in Indian thought. He, however, rightly cautions the reader against taking an exclusive view of the matter: "This does not mean that Indian thought is completely governed by world and life negation and ours by world and life affirmation."<sup>24</sup> Nature will not allow this totally exclusive distribution of dispositions to obtain; no world and life affirmation can be so complete as to prevent all frustrations of life, and a complete world and life negation would mean an act of suicide. These qualities have to be judiciously mixed. "Thus both in Indian and in European thought world and life affirmation and world and life negation are found side by side: but in Indian thought the latter is the predominant principle and in European the former."<sup>25</sup> Despite

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 257.

"If I were to try to sum up in a phrase the main difference between the Chinese and ourselves, I should say that they, in the main, aim at enjoyment, while we, in the main, aim at power. We like power over our fellow-men, and we like power over Nature." B. Russell in *Sceptical Essays*, p. 105.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>24</sup> A. Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

the seeming impression that Schweitzer disapproves of Indian ethos, he has this to write, "And, yet, all the same, we cannot feel ourselves completely justified in the face of these strange Eastern theories. They have in them something full of nobility which retains its hold on us, even fascinates us. This tinge of nobility comes from the fact that these convictions are born of a search for a theory of the universe and for the meaning of life."<sup>26</sup> If anything, Schweitzer has a strong word of criticism on Western thought: "How little reflection is present in the Western impulse to action becomes evident when this tries to square its ideas with those of the Far East. For, thought in the Far East has been constantly occupied in its search for the meaning of life, and forces us to consider the problem of the meaning of our own restlessness, the problem which we Westerners shirk so persistently."<sup>27</sup> The orientation of the West to action and that of the East to contemplation is emphasized by many others. Romain Rolland writes, "We take within our own, this hand that India extends to us. Our cause is one: the saving of human unity and its full accord. Europe, Asia, our strengths are different. Let us unite them for the accomplishment of a common task, for the achievement of human genius. Teach us to understand all things, Asia, teach us your knowledge of life! And learn of us action, achievement!"<sup>28</sup> Emphasizing the non-materialistic bent of India, Aurobindo writes, "The fact behind is that Indian culture has been from the beginning and has remained a spiritual, an inward looking religio-philosophical culture. Every thing else in it has derived from that one central and original peculiarity or has been in some way dependent on it or subordinate to it; even external life has been subjected to the inward look of the spirit."<sup>29</sup> "Philosophy in the Orient has never been a detached speculation: it has been an adjunct of a way of life."<sup>30</sup> "The chosen people of the future can be no nation, no race but an aristocracy of the whole world, in whom the vigour of European action will be

<sup>26</sup> A. Schweitzer, *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilisation*, p. 99.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>28</sup> Romain Rolland in A. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Aurobindo Ghosh, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, p. 60.

<sup>30</sup> W. E. Hocking in Radhakamal Mukerjee, *Theory and Art of Mysticism*, p. viii.

united to the serenity of Asiatic thought."<sup>21</sup> This emphasis on action expresses itself in the general social attitude, particularly in the great value the West puts on the period of youth when physical vigour is at its highest. Thus Kenneth Walker, a medical man by profession, writes, "The West is enamoured of individual independence and family life is slowly disappearing. But there is still more important reason for the European's and the American's distaste for old age. Because in the West such high value is placed on activity, a diminished capacity for action makes a man feel that he is on the downward slope of life's journey."<sup>22</sup> And again, "In the East, which has placed more emphasis on the cultivation of wisdom than on worldly activity, men who have reached this stage often leave their homes to lead a life of contemplation and religious devotion."<sup>23</sup>

The difference between the Eastern and the Western mind has cut so deep that some writers have emphasized the difficulty, almost the impossibility of the West ever really understanding the East. Schweitzer's difficulty has been already referred to. Northrop has this difficulty all along present in his mind in his *The Meeting of East and West*. The most explicit and emphatic admission of this difficulty has come from Jung. Discussing the yoga system of China in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Jung advises against the Europeans taking to yogic practices of the East on the ground that despite the high intrinsic merit of the system, it may not exactly suit the Western temperament. At another place he writes, "In the innumerable facets of the overflowing wealth of Indian spirituality an inner view of the soul is mirrored, which at first appears strange and inaccessible to the European mind schooled in Greek tradition."<sup>24</sup> And again, "Our habitual understanding from the outside breaks down here, because it is hopelessly inadequate and cannot grasp the essence of Indian spirituality. And I wish especially to warn against the oft attempted imitation of eastern practices. As a rule nothing more

<sup>21</sup> A. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Walker, *The Circle of Life*, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> C. G. Jung, "On the Psychology of Eastern Meditation" in K. B. Iyer (Ed.), *Art And Thought*, p. 109.

comes of it than an artificial blunting of our western intelligence."<sup>35</sup> And it may not be inappropriate to mention that of all the Western psychologists, Jung is the one most favourably disposed to Eastern religions. In a less subtle but more explicit manner, Kenneth Walker issues the warning: "In the second place, it is knowledge [meaning Yoga] which, even if it were obtainable, is incompatible with Western ideals. To live according to the teaching of the yogis we should have to sacrifice all that we have learnt to prize most highly—material success, commercial prosperity and worldly power."<sup>36</sup>

It might here be objected that no nation has a monopoly of qualities in the way in which it has been shown above. It is true that these differences are more of emphasis and selection rather than of presence or absence of a quality. Refuting the claim of anything absolutely unique in the experience of any race, Coomaraswamy yet writes on the distinctive contribution of the Hindus as follows, "All that India can offer to the world proceeds from her philosophy. This philosophy is not, indeed, unknown to others—it is equally the gospel of Jesus and of Blake, Lao Tze, and Rumi—but nowhere else has it been made the essential basis of sociology and education."<sup>37</sup> And Aurobindo similarly writes, "Spirituality is not the monopoly of India; however it may hide submerged in intellectualism or in other concealing veils, it is a necessary part of human nature. But the difference is between spirituality made the leading motive and determining power of both the inner and the outer life and spirituality suppressed, allowed only under disguises or brought in as a minor power, its reign denied or put off in favour of the intellect or of a dominant materialistic vitalism."<sup>38</sup> Although Radhakrishnan writes, "There is thus enough justification for regarding the mystic element in the West as Indian", in the very next sentence, he adds, "This should not lead us to think that there is anything exclusive or peculiar about it. In different places and

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 18.

times, and under the shadow of every religion, mysticism has developed."<sup>39</sup>

While the distinction between the East and the West has been seen or denied, accepted or refuted, the cultures of the East have generally been lumped together as one homogeneous whole. This is manifestly incorrect. In the very beginning of his essay, Dickinson says, "The first thing I have to note is that the East is not a unity, as implied in the familiar antithesis of East and West."<sup>40</sup> India and China are the two major cultures in the East—major in terms of area as well as of number. (The continuity in time of these two cultures is also remarkable.) And despite the superficial impression of commonness between the Indians and the Chinese, there are vital differences between the two. No serious student of national character can disregard such differences without disastrous results. Contrasting the ethos of various cultures, Schweitzer, at the very beginning of his book, *Indian Thought And Its Development*, writes, "...our modern European world-view (*Weltanschauung*), like that of Zarathustra and the Chinese thinkers, is on principle world and life affirming."<sup>41</sup> And Dixon elaborates this point, "While India fixes her gaze upon release from life's burden by escape into the invisible and spiritual from the material present, China looks steadily at things as now they are. Indian philosophers are metaphysicians. . . . Chinese thinkers, on the other hand, like Confucius, for centuries China's guiding star, are realists, in whose eyes the concerns of the present have an importance. Earthly life and the ordering of its daily affairs are the paramount issues. Something, they hold, can be done to mitigate our inevitable afflictions."<sup>42</sup> Treating China and Japan as nearer the West, Dickinson goes so far as to say "...that the real antithesis is not between East and West, but between India and the rest of the world."<sup>43</sup> In popular language, the Chinese would be called

<sup>39</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>40</sup> G. Lowes Dickinson, *An Essay on the Civilisations of India, China and Japan*, p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> P. 1.

<sup>42</sup> W. M. Dixon, *The Human Situation*, p. 202.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

optimists whereas the title of pessimism has been variously attributed to the Hindus.

According to Mead, the Balinese have so thoroughly split their emotion that only in the exaggerated, artificial atmosphere of the theatre can they bring back their feelings. The Balinese childhood is so full of disappointments with mother that the child learns early to withdraw and never again attaches any feeling to a real object for fear of disappointment. Even his ardour in marriage is cool and artificial. Developing Mead's points, Radhakamal Mukerjee writes, "Apathy and avoidance become the norms that govern daily social intercourse. Thus the Balinese, as they mature, develop a schizoid personality with marked features of dissociation, narcissism and withdrawal. Even anger and fear are socially expressed by them by placidity and indifference, accompanied 'by greater smoothness of speech'."<sup>44</sup> The difference between the Japanese and the Hindus is best brought out by comparing their attitudes to Yoga. Ruth Benedict herself writes, "Yoga in India is an extreme cult of asceticism. It is a way of obtaining release from the round of reincarnation. Man has no salvation except this release, *nirvana*, and the obstacle in his path is human desire. These desires can be eliminated by starving them out, by insulating them, and by courting self-torture. Through these means a man may reach sainthood and achieve spirituality and union with the divine. Yoga is a way of renouncing the world of the flesh and of escaping the tread-mill of human futility. It is also a way of laying hold of spiritual powers. The journey toward one's goal is the faster the more extreme the asceticism."<sup>45</sup> Contrasting this attitude with the Japanese, she says, "The Japanese thus wipe the slate clean of the assumptions on which Yoga practices are based in India. Japan, with a vital love of finitude which reminds one of the ancient Greeks, understands the technical practices of Yoga as being a self-training in perfection, a means whereby a man may obtain that 'expertness' in which there is not the thickness of a hair between a man and his deed. It is a training in efficiency. It is a training in self-reliance. Its rewards are here and now,

<sup>44</sup> *The Social Structure of Values*, p. 268.

<sup>45</sup> *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, p. 287.

for it enables a man to meet any situation with exactly the right expenditure of effort, neither too much nor too little, and it gives him control of his otherwise wayward mind so that neither physical danger from outside nor passion from within can dislodge him."<sup>44</sup> Coming to peoples lying in between India and Japan, let us take the Siamese first. As a culture belonging to the Orient, Siamese show resemblance to the Hindus: "Anger heats the heart, they say, disturbs life by leading to grudges and foolish actions, is disadvantageous; it should be curbed while still small. The 'cool heart' is without anxiety, rests at ease, . . ."<sup>45</sup> Note the difference now: "Sincere in their Buddhism, they however practice no asceticisms and seek no mysticism or Nirvana, but aim to achieve merit in this life, which they appreciate as good. With all their gentleness, they are worldly-minded."<sup>46</sup> Other description of the Siamese as cheerful, easy-going, jolly, gay, indolent, irresponsible towards money, evading debts, given to much petty pilfering etc., could only be individual traits among the Hindus and are not culturally evoked.

The picture of the Burmese shares much less similarity with the Hindus. There is much more in common between the Siamese and the Burmese, without, of course, the extreme control of anger in the Siamese. It would appear that of all the Asian peoples, the Hindus are perhaps the least inhibited with regard to aggression, the blend of masculinity and femininity is better, and they are nearer genital sexuality.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>45</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 590.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 590.

<sup>47</sup> The paucity of both published as well as locally available literature on Asian peoples has prevented better treatment of this section.

### CHAPTER III

"To know thyself, compare thyself to others."

—GOETHE,

*Antonio*, v, 5.

"It is a great advantage to be able mentally to contrast our own civilisation with a famous civilisation, akin to it yet widely dissimilar."

—R. W. LIVINGSTONE,

*Greek Ideals and Modern Life*, p. 12.

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## THEMES IN HINDU CULTURE

India and China are the two oldest and maturest civilisations of the East. Despite the immensity of time, they have shown a continuity which is an index to their vitality. It is remarkable that during all these countless years, not a single hostile, military event has marred the even tenor of the mutual relationship of the two peoples. One wonders if a parallel example is any where to be found in the world. It may be that the giant Himalayas has ruled out all possibilities of a military operation from either side. But the same Himalayas has not been able to prevent the scholars of one country from visiting the other. The commerce in ideas between India and China is a glorious record for mankind. At a time when travel was full of physical hazards, the lure of ideas was strong enough to induce them to undertake it. Buddhism is a gift of India to China. A large number of Indian teachers went and settled down in China, "the chief among them are: Dharmrakṣa (middle of the 3rd century); Saṃghabhūti (381 A.D.); Gautama Saṃghadeva (384 A.D.); Puṇyatrāta and his pupil Dharmayaśas (397 A.D.); Buddhayaśas (4th century); Kumārajīva (401 A.D.); Vimalākṣa (406 A.D.); Dharmakṣema (414 A.D.); Buddhajīva (423 A.D.); Guṇavarman (431 A.D.); Buddhabhadra (421 A.D.); Guṇabhadra (435 A.D.); Bodhidharma (520 A.D.); Vimokṣasena (541 A.D.); Upaśūnya and Paramārtha (546 A.D.); Jinagupta and his teachers Jñānabhadra and Jinayaśas (559 A.D.); Dharmagupta (590 A.D.); Prabhākaramitra (627 A.D.); Dōdhiruci (693 A.D.); Śubhākarasiṃha (716 A.D.); Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra (720 A.D.); Dharmadeva (973 A.D.)."<sup>1</sup> As for the Chinese

<sup>1</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *India and China*, p. 27.

scholars who have visited India, Radhakrishnan records that "when disputes arose about the doctrines and practices of the Buddhist faith, pilgrims from China went to India to know the truth at its source, to read the Buddhist texts in the original and visit the places hallowed by the memory of the Teacher. I-Ching reports that twenty Chinese monks visited India in the middle of the third century. A Gupta emperor built for them a monastery near Bodhgaya, called Cina Sanghārāma. The most enterprising of these Chinese visitors to India were Fa Hian (399-414 A.D.), . . . , Che-mong (404-424 A.D.); Sung Yu'n (350 A.D.); Hiuan-tsang (629-645 A.D.); Wang Hiuant-ts'o (634-647 A.D.) who paid more visits in later years, and I-Ching (671-695 A.D.). Of these and many others who visited India, Hiuan-tsang is undoubtedly the greatest. He is the symbol of Sino-Indian cultural collaboration."<sup>2</sup> Translations of now lost originals in India are still found in China.

As remarked in the previous chapter, the diversity of the Orient has more often been missed than noticed. Derk Bodde mentions that except for a few, most notably F. S. C. Northrop, "most writers have simply ignored such problems by speaking vaguely and sometimes mystically about the 'oneness of the Orient.'"<sup>3</sup> He goes on to observe: "As yet almost nobody has pointed out that India and China, despite certain undoubtedly strong ideological similarities, also display differences which, in the final analysis, may be equally significant."<sup>4</sup> The purpose of this chapter is precisely to bring out the differences between the Hindus and the Chinese. Bodde has detailed certain points which may well be quoted here: "Whereas India is famed for its religions and has always exalted its priestly class, China has produced no world religion, was already in early times dominated by a strongly secular trend, and possessed no important priesthood prior to the advent of Buddhism. Whereas the Indians have a rich epic literature and mythology, the Chinese have very little of either. The Chinese, on the other hand, have been meticulous recorders of historical events and undoubtedly possess the largest

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> "Harmony and Conflict in Chinese Philosophy" in *Studies In Chinese Thought, American Anthropologist*, 55, Memoir No. 75, 1953, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

historical literature of any long-lived people, whereas the Indians have been notoriously unhistorical."<sup>5</sup> Dickinson has vividly described the differences between the Hindus and the Chinese: "I can imagin no greater contrast than that between their [Chinese] character, their institutions, their habits, and those of the Indians. The Chinese are, and always have been, profoundly secular, as the Indians are, and always have been, profoundly religious. . . . But Buddhism and Taoism have never suited the Chinese character any more than Christianity has suited the European. . . . It was, and is, Confucianism with its rationalism, its scepticism, its stress on conduct, that expresses the Chinese spirit. . . . Mankind is the centre of the Chinese universe, as the Absolute is the centre of the Indian."<sup>6</sup> (Dickinson obviously means Hindu when he writes Indian.) Despite geographical proximity and mutual borrowings, India and China have maintained their distinct individualities.

A little too much has been made of the similarity between China and the West; Lin Yutang's frequent references to Western data (even though for contrast) has lent seeming support to the view. Dickinson has gone the farthest in this direction. His genuine difficulty in understanding India led him to over-emphasize the fact that China and Japan are so much easier to understand for a Westerner: "A Chinese, after all, is not so unlike an Englishman, and a Japanese not so unlike a Frenchman."<sup>7</sup> Again, "The fundamental attitude of the Chinese towards life is thus, in my judgement, and always has been, that of the most modern West. . . ."<sup>8</sup> The line of similarity based on the secular, humanistic, rationalistic, matter-of-fact orientation of the Chinese, should not cause one to overlook important points of differences as well. (Lin Yutang himself has brought out the contrast.) Bertrand Russell has often remarked on many points of differences between the Europeans and the Chinese: "Living in the East has, perhaps, a corrupting influence upon a white man, but I must confess that, since I came to know China, I have regarded laziness as

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>6</sup> G. Lowes Dickinson, *An Essay on the Civilisations of India, China and Japan*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

one of the best qualities of which men in the mass are capable."<sup>9</sup> He further writes, "Comparing the actual outlook of the average Chinese with that of the average Western, two differences strike one: first, that the Chinese do not admire activity unless it serves some useful purpose; secondly, that they do not regard morality as consisting in checking our own impulses and interfering with those of others."<sup>10</sup> And, these are not superficial differences but go deep into the characters of the peoples concerned. Even in the sphere of pure thought, Arthur F. Wright has criticised the tendency to examine Chinese thought in Western framework and remarks, "For example, epistemology is a major focus of interest for Western philosophers; it is subordinate or irrelevant for most Chinese thinkers."<sup>11</sup> In emphasizing similarities, differences should not be lost sight of.

We now begin our comparison of the two Oriental peoples.

For purposes of comparison, main reliance is placed on Lin Yutang's *My Country And My People*. The writer's choice of Lin Yutang as an authentic spokesman of China may need, in the eyes of not a few, some justification today. The change of government in China and Lin Yutang's sympathy with Chiang Kai-shek are political facts, in no way crucial for the validity of Lin Yutang's thoughts contained in the above book. From the considerations encountered in chapter I, we know how slow and difficult are changes in the national character of any people. If Lin Yutang's book could merit this praise of Pearl Buck's in 1939: "But suddenly, as all great books appear, this book appears, fulfilling every demand made upon it. It is truthful and not ashamed of the truth: it is written proudly and humorously and with beauty, seriously and with gaiety, appreciative and understanding of both old and new. It is, I think, the truest, the most profound, the most complete, the most important book yet written about China. And, best of all, it is written by a Chinese, a modern, whose roots are firmly in the past, but whose

<sup>9</sup> *Sceptical Essays*, p. 105.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup> *Studies in Chinese Thought, American Anthropologist*, 55, Memoir No. 75 1958, pp. 3-4.

rich flowering is in the present.”—<sup>13</sup> there is absolutely no good reason why it should not continue to do so at least till 1958.

Appropriate to the study of national character, we begin our comparison with the topic of “Character.”

#### CHARACTER

Lin Yutang writes, ““Character” is a typically English word. Apart from the English, few nations have laid such stress on character in their ideal of education and manhood as the Chinese. The Chinese seem to be so preoccupied with it that in their whole philosophy they have not been able to think of anything else. Totally devoid of any extra-mundane interests, and without getting involved in any religious clap-trap, this ideal of building of character has, through the influence of their literature, the theatre and proverbs, permeated to the lowliest peasant and provided him with a philosophy of life.”<sup>13</sup> Obviously, in the first part of the quotation, Lin Yutang has forgotten his Hindu neighbours. One could say without any fear of contradiction that the Hindus have attached considerable importance to character. As Confucius had gathered students round himself, to be able to look after their development personally, Brahmins, in their third stage of *vanaprastha*, would take students to make them learned in the *Vedas* and to help them form their character. “Besides intellectual equipment and a disciplined life, the achievement of studentship was training in character or ethical life.”<sup>14</sup>

If the test be the kind of leaders to whom the people have given their deepest reverence—as surely it must be—the importance attached to character by the Hindus would be revealed. Not cleverness, not intellectual brilliance but sacrifice, a touch of saintliness, certain amount of idealism are necessary to gain the regard of the Hindus. This is, of course, not to say that every

<sup>13</sup> Pearl Buck in Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People*, p. xvi.

The critics of Lin Yutang might very well ask us to why such decisive importance is attached to Pearl Buck's certificate. Well, if Pearl Buck's competence to opine authoritatively on a book on China is to be seriously questioned, better people than me will have to provide the answer.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> K. M. Kapadia, *Marriage and Family in India*, p. 29.

prominent personality will answer the above description, but this is the ideal type. At the moment, there has been such lowering of standards that the above type is more uncommon than common. (Freedom, after long slavery, may be the reason, as a starving man gorges himself with food.) But the fact remains that people believe them to be good, and, so believing, give them their respect. When they discover the feet of clay of their heroes, people do change their attitude. Even at the risk of invidious distinction, one must mention the latest example in the field of leadership—Acharya Vinoba Bhave. It is a pointer to the fact that the qualities mentioned above have not yet lost their hold on people's mind. "...even the Indian peasant does really believe that the true life is a spiritual life; that he respects the saint more than any other man; . . ."<sup>15</sup>

This does not mean that the Chinese have no regard for a sage; in point of fact, they have a great deal of it. But the words "sage" and "saint" themselves reveal the difference between the Chinese and the Hindus. The Chinese sage is wise, worldly-wise, for he has nothing else to be wise about. Not so the Hindu saint—there is nothing in this world, or, at least nothing important enough in this world for him to be wise about. The wisdom of the Hindu saint begins with the realization that the world is not important. The picture of the Chinese sage, as given by Derk Bodde, makes the difference vivid by contrast: "Very generally, however, we may say that the Sage is a being who, to a supreme degree, synthesizes in himself antitheses of the sort described in the preceding section. More specifically, he is one in whom there is a merging of "sublime and the common, the internal and the external, the root and the branch, the refined and the coarse. Unlike the ideal being venerated by some other civilisations, therefore, he does not stand aloof from the world of everyday affairs."<sup>16</sup> A Hindu saint does not work out any such synthesis or compromise between the good and the bad or the highest and the lowest. By supreme effort, he transcends the bad and struggles to maintain himself at the highest. He renounces the normal human emotions of

<sup>15</sup> G. Lowes Dickinson, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Derk Bodde, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

love and attachment, and abjures sex. To remain detached is his ideal; any sign of attachment in himself is evidence of his weakness. Whereas a Chinese sage is recognisable as a human being, a Hindu saint is not.

From the foregoing, it must have been clear that the omission of Lin Yutang is not altogether unintended, for the latter part of the quotation brings out the significant difference in the approaches of the Chinese and the Hindus. The character building of the Hindus is not only not devoid of any extra-mundane interests and involvement in any religious clap-trap but is positively based on it. While the Chinese ideal of character building is to attain an equanimity of mind which facilitates understanding of oneself and of one's fellowmen, leading to better adjustment in both favourable as well as in adverse circumstances, the Hindus would not raise it to the level of an ideal. The sociableness of the Hindus is of an altogether different variety. This world is not the place, to the adjustment and understanding of which, one's most serious thoughts should be directed. Understanding of self and attainment of equanimity is important, even supremely important, but not to facilitate social intercourse. The *varnashram* scheme so completely maps out the life of an individual that the problem here is not one of understanding but of following. Corresponding to one's station in life and age, one's duty is always outlined. "The scheme of the four stages of life (*asramas*), stations or stages, each with its proper kind of discipline and toil (*sram*, literally arduous toil), defines for each individual appropriate rights as well as duties and obligations."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Indian Scheme of Life*, p. 25.

It might be objected that the caste structure is neither so simple nor so strong today that it can provide solutions to most of these problems. The caste system is certainly not in its pristine simplicity but it is doubtful if it has gone as weak. Changes in certain outward features have been taken too complacently as indicative of profound social change—features like eating in hotels and restaurant, and travelling by train and other modern transport system where caste segregation does not obtain (although there are any number of restaurants in Bombay that add "Brahmin" to their names). These changes are doubtless noteworthy but have they shaken the foundation of caste system? Any frank answer must be in the negative. Caste system has shown a resilience that has ensured it further life. Most marriages take place within the caste and the few inter-caste love marriages that do take place (although far fewer than the opportunities available) do not eventually form

Fulfilment of duty raises no problem of understanding. It is to decide what is duty that is strewn with problems, psychological and ethical. Even in a moment of intense spiritual crisis and deepest moral confusion, Krishna tried to exhort Arjun to fight in the name of his Kshatriya caste. Understanding of the self is essential, even imperative for a Hindu but in relation to the entire Cosmos, the whole Creation, the Creator himself. It is the future of the soul and not the working of the mind in relation to society that demands his most urgent and earnest attention. Radhakrishnan writes, "Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual. It is the intense spirituality of India, and not any great political structure or social organisation that it has developed, that has enabled it to resist the ravages of time and the accidents of history. . . . The spiritual motive dominates life in India."<sup>18</sup> And again, "The dominant character of the Indian mind which has coloured all its culture and moulded all its thoughts is the spiritual tendency. Spiritual experience is the foundation of India's rich cultural history."<sup>19</sup>

#### CONTENTMENT AND HAPPINESS

The contentment of the Hindus is not because they are capable of squeezing every ounce of happiness out of this uncertain, tricky life, as is the case with the Chinese, but precisely because they see the foolishness of it; the treacherous, transient character of all such acquisitions. According to the Hindu view, if happiness is to be attained, it can never be with the help of desires but in spite of them and better still, without them. Even the Chinese see the tenuous character of human happiness based on satisfaction of desires but that does not make them turn their back on desires. On the contrary, it makes them keener to get the most out of it.

a no-caste group. Caste organisations thrive in the city of Bombay. And even a casual glance at the political life of the country will reveal that caste is the one most dominant single factor in the body politic. When converts to Christianity still call themselves "Brahmin" Christians (and would not marry among non-Brahmin converts), it is too early in the day to pronounce the doom of the caste system. For good or for bad, membership of a caste still provides the major orientation to a Hindu for relating oneself to this vast world of ours.

<sup>18</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

"A simple but hearty meal is, however, a great deal of luck, according to the Chinese theory of contentment, for a Chinese scholar puts it, "a well filled stomach is indeed a great thing: all else is luxury of life."<sup>20</sup> One can easily imagine a Hindu feeling amused at the naïvety of this attitude, although he knows the grain of truth it contains. And what a small grain of truth it is! He might well ask his Chinese friend, "How long will your sensation of well-filled stomach last? And what if you have overeaten or if you have indigestion?" The Hindus did have their Charwak who wanted them to drink *ghee* (butter) even with borrowed money. But the materialistic philosophy never made much of headway in India. One would agree with Northrop: "Thus, the Carwakian materialists may have been materialistic merely in the positivistic and nominalistic sense of Chandogya Upanishad. In any event, the matter is not important with respect to analysis of Indian culture, since this school of Indian thought never succeeded in gathering about itself a sizeable group of followers. It has had very little effect upon either traditional or present Indian institutions."<sup>21</sup> The Chinese build their happiness on simple pleasures; the Hindus see such a happiness already foredoomed.

The contentment of the Hindus, it would appear, is born more out of an indifference to sensory reality. Only when this life, this world becomes *the* reality that the pains and the sorrows here acquire an unbearable poignancy. The belief in life hereafter and in a reality deeper than the mere sensory takes the sting away.

Coupled with the above is the belief in the theory of *Karma*. The suffering Hindu takes upon himself the blame for whatever ill has befallen him. He must have done something in the past life to have deserved such punishment. In fact, the more seemingly underserved the stroke of ill-luck, the deeper his conviction that he must have really deserved it. Suffering then is the punishment for the sins of the past life and it not only makes pain admirably bearable but a distinct sense of relief is experienced. Suffering itself becomes salvation.

<sup>20</sup> Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People*, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 302.

## HUMOUR

"Humour is a state of mind. More than that, it is a point of view, a way of looking at life. The flower of humour blooms whenever in the course of development of a nation there is an exuberance of intellect able to flay its own ideals, for humour is nothing but intellect slashing at itself. In any period of history, when mankind was able to perceive its own futility, its own smallness, and its own follies and inconsistencies, a humourist appeared, like Chuangtse of China, Omar Khayyám of Persia, and Aristophanes of Greece."<sup>22</sup> We in India have not produced an Aristophanes who could make fun of Socrates, no Omar Khayyám who could mock God for his imperfect creation and certainly, no Chuangtse whose "laughter has reverberated throughout the ages." Perhaps the Hindus never had even a Laotse who laughed in "a thin, shrill yet cataclysmic laughter." And, how could the Hindus produce any one of these? The Hindus have taken life far too seriously to have the state of mind which produces humour. And, when they have perceived the futility and the smallness of their lives, the earth has slipped from under their feet. They were overwhelmed and not amused. The inconsistencies of life turn him reflective and he is too busy resolving them to be able to laugh.

"Theoretically at least, the Chinese people should have humour, for humour is born of realism; and the Chinese are an unusually realistic people. Humour is born of common sense and the Chinese have an overdose of common sense. Humour, especially Asiatic humour, is the product of contentment and leisure, and the Chinese have contentment and leisure to a supreme degree. A humorist is often a defeatist, and delights in recounting his own failures and embarrassments and the Chinese are often sane, cool-minded defeatists."<sup>23</sup> And Radhakrishnan complements, "Even when they discuss serious things, the Chinese have a sense of humour."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *India and China*, p. 7.

When the specific touchstones of realism, contentment, and defeatism are applied to the Hindus, the result is always in the negative. When Lin Yutang uses the word realism, he, of course, means it in reference to this mundane, sensory and material world. But the Hindu ethos does not accept this view. An attitude that looks upon this world as *maya* cannot develop the same realism as the Chinese. "In India the idea of truth became completely separated from outside fact; all outside was illusion; truth was an inner disposition. In such a world there is little scope for the observing reason or the seeing eye. Where all except the spirit is unreal, it is manifest folly to be concerned with an exterior that is less than a shadow."<sup>25</sup> Realism in the sense of accepting the limitations of life may be there among the Hindus too but with a contrary reaction. (Prince Siddharth got into no mood of humour when he saw the sick, the old and the dead.) More often than not, it will induce in him a mood of mysticism rather than humour. "Life is a huge farce and we human beings are mere puppets in it."<sup>26</sup> A Hindu will only too readily agree with this description but that itself would put him on the trail to find out whose puppets we are. He may not take this life seriously but he would seriously want to know what is to be taken seriously. For one must take some thing seriously for a worthwhile, meaningful existence. He cannot sit back and laugh and giggle and feel amused. On the contrary, his deepest anxieties have been stirred. All the age-old, insoluble questions about Life would begin to plague him as soon as he realizes that life is a huge farce. If he cannot face it, he will turn a cynic but not a humorist.

The second point of contentment has already been shown to differ from its Chinese counterpart. Not leisure, not relaxation but a dead seriousness follows the attainment of contentment by a Hindu. (Even the Hindu saint, in his absolute immobility, is not relaxed but extremely busy.) For, what has he really attained? His contentment is merely his indifference to loss and gain here. But that itself has revealed to him an altogether new world that has to be gained. And life may be too short to gain

<sup>25</sup> E. Hamilton, *The Greek Way to Western Civilisation*, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

it adequately enough. Contentment here is not a sense of fullness, of arrival, of completion. In the usual sense of the term, Hindu 'contentment' is rather contentless. (That is why, it is not followed by cheerfulness.) A dedicated man who does not care for money is not being so much content with money as indifferent to it. Similarly, a Hindu who looks content with this world is only not particular about it. But this Hindu has other thirsts. New hungers have awakened in him and he may be altogether too busy to be able to laugh at himself. And he does not very much laugh at others. Laughing at others, no matter how mild or well-meant, is always derisive. Derisive humour proceeds from cruelty. Unless one delights in causing pain to others, one cannot laugh at them.<sup>27</sup> And this cannot be generally true of Hindus. As Professor Radhakamal Mukerjee has pointed out, "India's holiest word is neither Knowledge nor Yoga, nor Love but Compassion (Karuna)."<sup>28</sup>

Humour in the event of defeat is a device to reduce its humiliation. But a humiliation of a crushing nature that needs to be reduced can follow only upon a defeat that is taken as final. A battle could be lost or gained but the whole war remains to be fought out. And life is so vast, so continuous for a Hindu that finality does not knock at his door every time something happens to him. Even such poignant losses as the death of a grown-up son or of the husband of a newly married bride is made bearable in the Hindu scheme. If nothing else, the young bereaved wife can die with him and be his again. After all, instances of women cheerfully (and sometimes in defiance of pressure and persuasion) burning themselves on the pyre of their dead husbands are by no means rare, ghastly though the sight might appear to us. (And this is because we are too conscious or perhaps only conscious of the physical pain and suffering involved.) Under such a scheme of unending succession of lives,

<sup>27</sup> "But it is *Schadeufreude*, a mischievous delight in the misfortunes of others, which remains the worst trait in human nature. It is a feeling which is closely akin to cruelty, and differs from it, to say the truth, only as theory from practice. In general, it may be said of it that it takes the place which pity ought to take—pity which is its opposite and the true source of all real justice and charity." Schopenhauer, *On Human Nature*, p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. xiii.

what event can acquire such decisive, crucial importance that failure in it will spell disastrous humiliation? Despite the numerous frustrations and denials, the Hindus have neither turned cynics nor humorists.

It is instructive to mention here that Lin Yutang in his anthology, *The Wisdom of India* has a chapter entitled "Indian Humour" wherein the stories of the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa* are included. Without wishing to contradict him, the writer would like to point out that these stories are not exactly correct specimens of humour. It is difficult to burst out laughing or even to chuckle as one reads them. (And what humour deserves to be called humour that does not cause laughter, restrained or unrestrained?) The declared purpose of these stories is to impart wisdom. "For purposes of popular instruction stanzas of an ethical import were early worked up with existing prose fables and popular stories."<sup>29</sup> It has, therefore, a didactic value—to change a raw youth into a mature personality. One wonders if such serious, conscious intentions of education can co-exist with any humour, explicit or implied. Perhaps one can see some humour in the animal characters talking words of wisdom for the benefit of the humans. Animal characters, however, are not introduced as satires on human beings; at least this suggestion is not strong.

It may be pointed out that Sanskrit dramas have the character of *vidushak* whose function it is to provide mirth and merriment. But his humour lies in the fact that a foolish looking person can see wisdom where the habitually wise fail. It is the incongruity of the content and the packet that calls for laughter.<sup>30</sup> But there ends the humour: If the effect of his words is just laughter and nothing more, the real purpose of it is lost. One must think over what he has said, for he has said what a truly wise man

<sup>29</sup> "Sanskrit Language and Literature" in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (14th Ed.), Vol. 19, p. 966.

<sup>30</sup> "Laughter is stirred in the human midriff, if Bergson and its other analytical chemists are to be trusted, by one or other of two qualities in a statement or a happening, or by both in happy juxtaposition (when surely we have some of the best laughter in the world): one, incongruity and two, irreverence." E. Raymond, *Through Literature to Life*, p. 77.

would have said. The light-heartedness belongs to the superficial; the essence of the situation is serious.

One would agree with the words of Will Durant: "The Hindu genius, to an outsider, seems sombre and doubtless the Hindus have not had much cause for laughter. The dialogues of Buddha indicate a great variety of games, including one that strangely resembles chess, but neither these nor their successors exhibit the vivacity and joyousness of Western games."<sup>21</sup> Surendra-nath Dasgupta has remarked that pessimism is to be found in most systems of Indian thought. And, pessimism is no promoter of laughter; instead, it produces gloom and depression.

### FEMINITY

The Hindus have very often been derogatorily dubbed, by Europeans, as effeminate, lacking in manliness, in aggressive, forceful assertion of their rights. The charge has generally a strong political flavour and therefore, needs to be divested of its feeling tone to help appreciate the truth it really hints at.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 500.

<sup>22</sup> "The Indians are naturally a pusillanimous people; even the children of Europeans born in India lose the courage peculiar to their own climate.

The heat of the climate may be so excessive as to deprive the body of all vigour and strength. Then the faintness is communicated to the mind; there is no curiosity, no enterprise, no generosity of sentiment; the inclinations are all passive; indolence constitutes the utmost happiness; scarcely any punishment is so severe as mental employment." de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, p. 224.

Contrast the above with what Will Durant writes :

"Nothing should more deeply shame the modern student than the reeency and inadequacy of his acquaintance with India. Here is a vast peninsula of nearly two million square miles; two-thirds as large as the United States, and twenty times the size of its master, Great Britain; 320,000,000 souls, more than in all North and South America combined, or one-fifth of the population of the earth [the reference is obviously to the undivided India]; an impressive continuity of development and civilization from Mahenjadaro, 2900 B.C. or earlier, to Gandhi, Raman and Tagore; faiths compassing every stage from barbarous idolatry to the most subtle and spiritual pantheism; philosophers playing a thousand variations on one monistic theme from the Upanishads eight centuries before Christ to Shankara eight centuries after him; scientists developing astronomy three thousand years ago, and winning Nobel prizes in our own time; a democratic constitution of untraceable antiquity in the villages, and wise and beneficent rulers like Ashoka and Akbar in the capitals; minstrels singing great epics almost as old as Homer, and poets holding world audiences today; artists raising gigantic temples

The first correction is to absolve the feminine component of its weakening, enfeebling accusation which can be best done by contrasting a typical masculine attitude with a typical feminine.

There is a tremendous halo in many minds about the attitude of break but not bend, generally taken as *the* manly attitude—always uncompromising and forthright, never yielding or even admitting the possibility of defeat. To such minds, the attitude of bend but not break is undiluted cowardice and outright defeatism. It is difficult to see the heroic character and the superiority of the first attitude. What is wanted is the triumph of the truth or the vindication of the ideal and not an enhancement of personal vanity of any individual. And there is a strong note of this personal vanity in the attitude of break but not bend. One can easily imagine such a 'hero' defeating the cause itself if it can inflate his personal ego. These 'heroes' grow and prosper and look ever more 'heroic' as one success follows another. But when defeat comes, all their toughness goes. Is it not of the essence of the ideal that it has a strength of its own, a resilience to survive defeats and set-backs which evil or falsehood cannot do? It would seem that these 'manly heroes' have an exaggerated confidence in their own powers. But they lack an implicit faith in the justice and righteousness of the cause, a serene belief in the ultimate triumph of the truth. That is why they betray an anxious, aggressive attitude all the time, afraid of any compromise, mistaking it for utter, final defeat. The writer is not overlooking the willingness of such a 'hero' to fight and his readiness to die. That is what gives him the appearance of a hero. But heroism is a much sounder, sustained virtue, not to be exhausted in a few hysterical acts. If this be so, then the attitude that bends, that compromises, that waits in the interest of the ultimate victory of the ideal is both morally superior and strategically effective. There is no one moment when heroism is

for Hindu gods from Tibet to Ceylon and from Cambodia to Java, or carving perfect palaces by the score for Mogul kings and queens—this is the India that patient scholarship is now opening up, like a new intellectual continent, to that Western mind which only yesterday thought civilisation an exclusively European thing." *Our Oriental Heritage*, p. 391.

And all this by the born tired, lazy, indolent, unenergetic, weak, feeble, incurious Hindus!

shown in all its dramatic brilliance but a heroism of lesser glow is demanded for a much longer period. If by being feminine, one can learn this, one has only armed oneself more effectively for the many vicissitudes of life.<sup>23</sup> To identify femininity with fear, timidity, and surrender is a pitiable confusion of understanding.

Let us come back to the Hindus after this necessary clarification. In a way, the charge of effeminacy by Europe is understandable for reasons deeper than merely political. As dealt with earlier, the ethos of European culture differs from that of the Eastern in a manner that could, with ease, be called masculine, founded as it is on Greco-Roman heritage. Andre Maurois writes, "I do not in any way contend that one sex is superior to the other. I believe that communities which lack the feminine influence are apt to fall into abstraction and the madness of systems which, being false, require violence to put into practice. We have, alas, seen too many examples of this. A masculine civilisation like that of ancient Greece perishes through politics, metaphysics and vanity."<sup>24</sup> Ghurye sums up: "The elements that have distinguished Western civilisation from those of China and India are energy, intolerance and abstract intelligence."<sup>25</sup> And Russell confirms, "...; Europe has been warlike and clever, rather than urbane."<sup>26</sup> To the West, the ethos of Asian cultures would genuinely and naturally appear feminine. Thus understood, the attributing of femininity to the Orient may be acceptable.

<sup>23</sup> "There is nothing so important for the integration of a truly masculine man as the companionship of a truly feminine woman either wife, mistress or friend. Through her he can keep in permanent touch with the profound conception of the human species, of which men who do not care for women are ignorant. Man's thoughts travel by aeroplane; they fly above space and time. They discover wide but unsubstantial landscapes; they mistake 'the straw of words for the grain of things.'" Andre Maurois, *The Art of Living*, p. 50.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> G. S. Ghurye, *Culture and Society*, p. 157.

<sup>26</sup> *In Praise of Idleness*, p. 178.

"Main currents of European Literature, Vol. I, p. 126. Amiel refers to the Hindu streak in him. He writes, 'There is a great affinity in me with the Hindu genius—that mind, vast, imaginative, loving, dreamy and speculative, but destitute of ambition, personality and will. Pantheistic disinterestedness, the effacement of the self in the great whole, womanish gentleness, a horror of slaughter, antipathy to action—these are all present in my nature, ...' S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 248.

Lin Yutang writes, "Indeed, the Chinese mind is akin to the feminine mind in many respects. Femininity, in fact, is the only word that can summarise its various aspects. The qualities of the feminine intelligence and feminine logic are exactly the qualities of the Chinese mind. The Chinese head, like the feminine head, is full of common sense. It is shy of abstract terms, like women's speech. The Chinese way of thinking is synthetic, concrete and revels in proverbs, like women's conversation. They never have had higher mathematics of their own, and seldom have gone beyond the level of arithmetic, like many women, with the exception of those masculine women prize-winners at college. Women have a surer instinct of life than men and the Chinese have it more than other people. The Chinese depend largely upon their intuition for solving all nature's mysteries, that same "intuition" or "sixth sense" which makes many women believe a thing is so because it is so. And finally Chinese logic is highly personal, like women's logic."<sup>27</sup>

This rather long quotation would show how Hindus differ from the Chinese in partaking of femininity in many specific ways. The Hindu mind is not as feminine as the Chinese; the masculine component is quite marked in the Hindus. Hindu thinking is far from being not abstract. As a matter of fact, there is so much of abstractness in so much of Hindu philosophy, particularly Samkhya and Vedanta, that only a developed intellect can grasp its subtle reasonings and hair-splitting arguments. Does not Will Durant compare Kapila with Aristotle and Shankara with Kant? And is it not a well-known fact that India was the home of mathematics and astronomy, with its inestimable contribution of Arabic numerals and decimal system to the total knowledge of the world? Hindus have taken keen delight in pure thought, in abstract knowledge, in subtle reasoning, in hair-splitting arguments. Philosophical debates and disputations have been very common feature of Hindu intellectual life. Thus testifies will Durant: "What other nation has ever thought of celebrating festivals with gladiatorial debates between the leaders of rival philosophical schools?"<sup>28</sup> Not unoften, even

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 80.

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 588.

the saints of India have combined deep mysticism with powerful intellects. Buddha and Shankara in the past and Vivekanand and Aurobindo in the contemporary period are some of the more striking examples. Of the many Yogas outlined, *gñāna* yoga or union with God through the path of knowledge, is not only one of them but is admittedly the highest. It is, of course, also acknowledged to be the most difficult of all.

Logic is generally believed to be the universal failing of women. By logic is meant the laws of abstract reasoning, unrelated to self and detached from all specific issues and problems. But a logic which proceeds from the self and ends in it, has its abundance in women and being feminine, in the Chinese. Judged by the delight the Hindus have taken in pure thought and the extent to which they developed it, one would expect them to have a definite, well-formulated system of logic. And the first of the six systems of Brahmanical philosophy is, in fact, *Nyāya*, the Hindu system of logic. The analytical and intellectual aspect of mental activity has been far from absent. "The Indian mind was extraordinarily analytical and had a passion for putting ideas and concepts, and even life's activity into compartments."<sup>39</sup> And Radhakrishnan adds, "All this is evidence of the strong intellectuality of the Indian mind which seeks to know the inner truth and the law of all sides of human activity. This intellectual impulse is not confined to philosophy and theology, but extends over logic and grammar, rhetoric and language, medicine and astronomy, in fact all arts and sciences, from architecture to zoology. Every thing useful to life or interesting to mind becomes an object of enquiry and criticism. It will give an idea of the all comprehensive character of intellectual life, to know that even such minutiae as the breeding of the horses and the training of elephants had their own shastras and literature."<sup>40</sup> And again, "The dominance of interest in the subjective does not mean that in the objective sciences India had nothing to say. If we refer to the actual achievements of India in the realm of positive sciences, we shall see that the opposite is the case. Ancient Indians laid the foundation of mathematical and mecha-

<sup>39</sup> J. Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 86.

<sup>40</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 27.

nical knowledge. They measured the land, divided the year, mapped out the heavens, traced the course of the sun and the planets through the zodiacal belt, analysed the constitution of matter, and studied the nature of birds and beasts, plants and seeds."<sup>41</sup>

Is not dominance of interest in the subjective or the objective world a criterion of masculinity and femininity ?

Or, take another example. The Brahmins were placed at the top in the social hierarchy no doubt, but the Kshatriyas, the warrior class, were next. The highest respect went to the self-sacrificing, dedicated Brahmins, but the fighter was far from being despised. (And it should not be forgotten that the Brahmins were the intellectuals among the Hindus.) "The warrior class, though not at the top, held a high position, and not, as in China, where it was looked upon with contempt."<sup>42</sup> Though not blood-thirsty, the Hindus did, nevertheless, fight. India had an extensive empire at one time. And it was in the Punjab that Alexander the Great met with a tough resistance. Is not the presence or absence of martial element yet another criterion of masculinity and femininity ?

### CHINESE HUMANISM AND RELIGION

"To understand the Chinese ideal of life one must try to understand Chinese humanism."<sup>43</sup> The Chinese Ambassador in India, Dr. Lo Chia-Luen confirms the place Lin Yutang accords to humanism in Chinese life: "In the first place, Chinese thought is fundamentally humanistic. The ethical system of Confucius concerns itself chiefly with improvement and harmonization of human relationship. Its starting point is self-cultivation of the individual and its final goal is realization of Jen or human-heartedness, which is an honest love and the sense of fellow-feeling towards other men."<sup>44</sup> In reply to the ever-recurring and

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> J. Nehru, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>43</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>44</sup> Lo Chia-Luen, "General Characteristics of Chinese Thought" in S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *History Of Philosophy: Eastern And Western*, Vol. I, p. 557.

therefore, never-answered question, "What is the meaning of life?", Lin Yutang elaborates the concept of humanism in the following words: "The Chinese humanists believe they have found the true end of life and are conscious of it. For the Chinese the end of life lies not in life after death, for the idea that we live in order to die, as taught by Christianity, is incomprehensible; nor in Nirvana, for that is too metaphysical; nor in the satisfaction of accomplishment, for that is too vain-glorious; nor yet in progress for progress' sake, for that is meaningless. The true end, the Chinese have decided in a singularly clear manner, lies in the enjoyment of a simple life, especially the family life, and in harmonious social relationship."<sup>45</sup> In this paragraph, the author has given us an idea of the various orientations that are possible to choose from and the choice the Chinese themselves have made.

In this section, Lin Yutang has often compared the Chinese attitude to life with the Western or the Christian. (Christian by birth, now turned pagan, it is only to be expected from him.) The differences he draws between the Chinese humanism and Western attitude, founded on Christianity, are many and interesting: "The difference between China and the West seems to be that the Westerners have a greater capacity for getting and making more things and a lesser ability to enjoy them, while the Chinese have a greater determination and capacity to enjoy the few things they have."<sup>46</sup> He beautifully explains how absence of religion has been both a cause and an effect of Chinese humanism: "This trait, our concentration on earthly happiness, is as much a result as a cause of the absence of religion. For if one cannot believe in the life hereafter as the consummation of the present life, one is forced to make the most of this life before the farce is over. The absence of religion makes this possible."<sup>47</sup>

One does not know if on this side of the Himalayas, things have been different because of the overwhelming presence of religion; for religion has been present in India from time imme-

<sup>45</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

morial. The question, "What is the meaning of life?" has occurred in India with perhaps greater persistence, but the Hindus have not given the same answer to this question as the Chinese have. From the unknown sages who composed the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* to Ramakrishna, Maharshi Raman and Aurobindo or even J. Krishnamurti, this question has engaged their deepest attention—in fact, the word attention is not enough, it should be meditation—but always with, what would appear to our Chinese neighbours, a negative answer. It is interesting that what in India was almost an atheistic movement, became a spiritual force in China. Radhakrishnan argues that the weakness of Confucian teaching is that it keeps unfulfilled the spiritual yearnings of man: "Inattention to the deepest part of our being is the fundamental defect of all humanist codes."<sup>48</sup> In pursuance of his pattern, Lin Yutang contrasts Confucianism with Christianity and while describing Jesus as romanticist, mystic and humanitarian and Confucius as realist, positivist and humanist, he admits that areligious Confucianism has not quite satisfied even the Chinese and "how that deficiency was made up for by a Taoist or Buddhist supernaturalism."<sup>49</sup> And he at once adds, "But this supernaturalism seems in China to be separated in general from the question of the ideal of life: it represents rather the spiritual by-plays and outlets that merely help to make life endurable."<sup>50</sup> This shows two things: (i) what was of no or little spiritual import in India became a source of spiritual satisfaction to the Chinese, and (ii) even this little spirituality was diverted into by-plays.

Lin Yutang mentions that he has "observed with interest the differences between a religious culture like that of Christendom and a frankly agnostic culture like that of the Chinese, and how these differences are adapted to man's inner needs, which I assume are essentially the same for all human race."<sup>51</sup> He outlines three functions of religion: we shall deal here only with the last two. The second function of religion is to act as a sanction for moral

<sup>48</sup> *India and China*, p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

conduct. Here Lin Yutang shows the difference between Chinese and Christian points of view: "Humanist ethics is a man-centered, not a God-centered ethics."<sup>52</sup> His criticism of Christian ethics as needing the intermediacy of God, would very well apply to the Hindus also. Discussing in general the content of values in different societies, Sorokin makes the following observation, "Ideational moral systems (e.g., Hindu, Buddhistic, and Taoist Nirvana), whatever their secondary traits, are marked, first, by indifference to, or contempt of, or a low evaluation of, the external empirical world and its material values. ("My kingdom is not of this world.")"<sup>53</sup> Only by relating things to God or some such superior force can the value of things be determined on this earth. By itself, this world has no value, no significance.

The third function of religion is to give security to man in this uncertain world. "There is religion as an inspiration and living emotion, a feeling for the grim grandeur and mystery of the universe and a quest for security in life, satisfying man's deepest spiritual instincts."<sup>54</sup> Lin Yutang admits that there are moments in life when the sense of death and futility overcomes one and Chinese are no exception to this rule. But "though religion gives peace by having a ready-made answer to all these problems, it decidedly detracts from the sense of the unfathomable mystery and poignant sadness of this life, which we call poetry. . . . A pagan, who has not these ready-made answers to his problems and whose sense of mystery is for ever unquenched and whose craving for security is for ever unanswered and unanswerable, is driven inevitably to a kind of pantheistic poetry."<sup>55</sup> This is not a passage from *The Future of An Illusion* but Lin Yutang's own version of pagan philosophy. This attitude is so markedly contrasting to the Hindu attitude that no explanation need be offered.

To sum up this topic, the Hindus are basically religious, the Chinese are basically non-religious. "Nothing is more striking

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>53</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. I, p. 98.

<sup>54</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

than the Chinese humanist devotion to the true end of life as they conceive it, and the complete ignoring of all theological or metaphysical phantasies extraneous to it."<sup>52</sup> While overwhelming religiosity is the clue to life in one civilisation, its absence is the clue to life in another. "Buddhism itself, when absorbed by the educated Chinese, became nothing but a system of mental hygiene, which is the essence of Sung philosophy."<sup>53</sup> And so, "There is a certain wholehearted concentration on the material life, a certain zest in living, which is mellow, perhaps deeper, any way just as intense as in the West. In China the spiritual values have not been separated from the material values, but rather help man in a keener enjoyment of life as it falls to our lot. . . . We live the life of the senses and the life of the spirit at the same moment, and see no necessary conflict."<sup>54</sup> What would be the Hindu attitude to it? Sorokin, who has included Hindu civilisation in the Ideational moral system, gives the answer: "They are [Ideational civilisations] marked, second, by repression, limitation, and bridling of physical needs, wishes, lusts, desires, for any of the pleasures and values of the empiric and material world. Asceticism is one manifestation of this."<sup>55</sup> To conclude, "There is no doubt that the Chinese are in love with life, in love with this earth, and will not forsake it for an invisible heaven. They are in love with life, which is so sad and yet so beautiful, and in which moments of happiness are so precious because they are so transient."<sup>56</sup> Only a Charvak could echo similar thoughts from this side of the Himalayas.<sup>57</sup> But the question is: How many Hindus will swear by him?

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>55</sup> P. A. Sorokin, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>56</sup> Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

Cf. "To rejoice in life, to find the world beautiful and delightful to live in, was a mark of the Greek spirit which distinguished it from all that had gone before . . . The Greeks knew to the full how bitter life is as well as how sweet, joy and sorrow, exultation and tragedy, stand hand in hand in Greek literature, but there is no contradiction involved thereby." Edith Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> "The spiritualistic thinkers of India may be called pessimists in as much as they run after heaven or liberation and try to get rid of the sorrows and miseries of worldly life. But the materialists are always optimistic. They do not hold the view that this world is full of misery.

In the next chapter, we shall examine the rôle of the *Bhagavadgītā* in creating the Hindu mentality we have come across here. It is not without significance that with all the cultural borrowings, our Chinese neighbour have not much cared for *Bhagavadgītā*, the priceless gem of Hindu scriptures which has not failed to win admirers even in the sensate West.

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They hold that pleasure in *this* world is the only thing which is true and good. The only reasonable end of man is enjoyment—gratification of his sense (*kāma evaika puruṣārthaḥ*).” D. Bhattacharya, “The Cārvāk Philosophy (Materialism)” in S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p. 186.

## CHAPTER IV

"Yet if the hold which a work has on the mind of man is any clue to its importance, then the *Gītā* is the most influential work in Indian thought."

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN,

*Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 519.

"The *Gītā* has become for us a spiritual reference book."

—M. K. GANDHI,

*Gita the Mother*, p. 2.

"It is not merely the most read but also the most idealised book in world-literature."

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER,

*Indian Thought and Its Development*, p. 195.

## ROLE OF BHAGAVADGITA

The importance of the *Gītā* for the Hindu mind can hardly be exaggerated. "The Bhagavadgītā which forms part of the Bhīṣma parva of the Mahābhārata is the most popular religious poem of Sanskrit literature. . . . It is a book conveying lessons of philosophy, religion and ethics."<sup>1</sup> A Hindu turns to it when he is serene as well as when he is ruffled. It may be a daily ritual with him or it may be his only hope when crisis threatens. The occasions on which the *Gītā* is read and its teachings are taken to heart are as numerous as they are varied. From a minor emotional disturbance to the most intense spiritual distress, the *Gītā* is looked up to as the last word and the unfailing source of help. It has exerted on the Hindu mind an immeasurable influence. Its teachings have percolated down, in some form or other, to the common people. Nor are the intellectuals, the elite outside the pale of its influence. On them the *Gītā* has exerted and continues to exert a fascination all its own. One has only to look at the number of commentaries to appreciate the overwhelming significance of this book of 700 verses. "Its popularity and influence have not waned ever since it was composed and written in the pre-Buddhistic age and today its appeal is as strong as ever in India. Every school of thought and philosophy looks up to it and interprets it in its own way. In times of crisis, when the mind of man is tortured by doubt and is torn by the conflict of duties, it has turned all the more to the *Gita* for light and guidance. For it is a poem of crisis, of

<sup>1</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 519.

political and social crisis and even more so, of crisis in the spirit of man. Innumerable commentaries on the *Gita* have appeared in the past and they continue to come out with unfailing regularity. Even the leaders of thought and action of the present day—Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Gandhi—have written on it, each giving his own interpretation.”<sup>2</sup> And Aurobindo Ghose himself writes, “Its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas are actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival of a nation and a culture. It has been said recently by a great voice that all we need of spiritual truth for the spiritual life is to be found in the *Gita*.”<sup>3</sup>

An analysis of the *Gītā*, therefore, is bound to unlock certain valuable strands in Hindu character. The existing (numerous) commentaries on the *Gītā* were found to be very unhelpful for this task. The treatment very often tends to be abstruse and thereby ceases to be of any value for a study of this nature. One would imagine that most people might have read the very readable *Gītā* itself than the difficult commentaries. For, the language of the *Gītā* has a simplicity that makes the text both easy and meaningful. Commentaries go into philosophical disputations where the directness of the advice that the *Gītā* gives to a torn person is pitifully lost.<sup>4</sup> Taking the *Gītā* as a book on practical psychology, on conduct, on general attitude to life and work—which is what it is for the vast majority and on which mainly its reputation of a helpful guide in distress rests—the text will any day be preferred to a commentary.

It is safe to say that most people do not understand and accept the teachings of the *Gītā* in its entirety but only in

<sup>2</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>3</sup> *Essays on the Gita*, p. 452.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. “... the word philosophy is liable to frighten the ordinary reader. It brings to his mind the disputations of the professional philosophers, the wordy warfare of dialecticians, the appeal of the learned to classical schools of thought and the nimble acrobatics of logic.” Kenneth Walker, *The Circle of Life*, p. 7.

parts.<sup>5</sup> In such a case, it may not be very rewarding to subject the book as a whole to analysis. Rather, it will be more fruitful if analysis is pursued from verse to verse and/or such verses as constitute a unity. A large number of verses have been left out, verses that contain all or too much of philosophy and none or too little of psychology. From the point of view of the present study, the philosophical verses lose their significance and have, therefore, been omitted from treatment. Only the first three chapters of the book have been examined. Certain repetition has been found unavoidable. This is mainly due to the arrangement of the *Gītā* itself; the author has returned back to topics earlier mentioned and therefore, the argument of the present writer also had to be dispersed.<sup>6</sup>

## CHAPTER I

Verse 1 to verse 27 is devoted to the description of the arrangement of the two armies. With heroes and mighty warriors of both sides enumerated, Arjun stood between the two armies to have an over-all survey of the field.

And as he saw the entire field, a new mood came over him which he describes and justifies from verse 28 to the end of the chapter.

Now, it is a very difficult task to diagnose, beyond controversy, the mood in which Arjun found himself. Many interpretations are possible and he himself has given a variety of reasons. The present writer is inclined to take the view that what gripped

<sup>5</sup> This can be easily appreciated if we recall how selective we are in our own acceptance of systems of thought. Certain aspect or emphasis is accepted while certain other is rejected. For example, the positing of unconscious mind of psychoanalysis might be accepted but not its theory of infantile sexuality.

<sup>6</sup> The book followed here is S. Radhakrishnan's English translation, *The Bhagavadgītā*.

him most was fear, fear of defeat and destruction.<sup>7</sup> Note the first words he uttered in this mood:<sup>8</sup>

When I see my own people arrayed and eager for fight  
O Kṛṣṇa, my limbs quail, my mouth goes dry, my body  
shakes and my hair stands on end. (29)

(The bow) Gāṇḍīva slips from my hand and my skin  
too is burning all over. I am not able to stand steady.  
My mind is reeling. (30)

And I see evil omens, O Keśava (Kṛṣṇa), nor do I  
forsee any good by slaying my own people in the  
fight. (31)

Is not the description of physical symptoms of Arjun clearly indicative of fear? "...he experiences a sinking in the pit of the stomach, he breaks out in a cold sweat, his skin becomes pale, his mouth dry, his breathing difficult and his heart races."<sup>9</sup> This is not another verse from the *Gītā* but Kenneth Walker's description of a man suddenly face to face with danger and vibrations of fear running through his physical being. And Arjun was suddenly face to face with a danger—a devastating, most destructive war in which the fight would be to the finish. Unless one puts an impossibly exaggerated military value on Krishna, the army of the Kauravas was far mightier and far more numerous. Duryodhana says, "Unlimited is this army of ours which is guarded by Bhīṣma while that army of theirs which is guarded by Bhīma is limited." (10) Arjun's own *guru* was with the Kauravas. And one has only to recall the extreme reverence in which teachers were then held to realise the unnerving effect

<sup>7</sup> See the choice of words with which Krishna tried to rouse Arjun to action: "Yield not to this unmanliness, O Pārtha (Arjuna), for it does not become thee. Cast off this petty faintheartedness and arise, O Oppressor of the foes (Arjuna)." (Ch. II, 8)

And is not fear considered most unmanly?

<sup>8</sup> The chapter is mentioned only when the verse quoted is from a chapter other than the one under consideration. When unspecified, the verse is from the chapter of the *Gītā* that is being examined. Whenever verses are italicised, it is by the present writer.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

this fact alone must have had on Arjun.<sup>10</sup> A student perhaps never even imagined that he could ever equal his *guru* in the very art he has learnt from him. And the mightiest of all personalities, both in moral stature as well as in military valour, Bhishma was the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. Is it, then, any wonder that when Arjun saw the army thus arrayed, nothing but defeat haunted him? Was there even a shadow of a chance of victory for Arjun? Arjun could not have had unbounded faith in the powers of Krishna. Where was then the need for such a bloody war to settle the issue in favour of the Pandavas? Throughout their lives, the Pandavas had suffered at the hands of the Kauravas and always with Krishna as their friend, guide and philosopher. Krishna had just then failed in his peace efforts. If then, battle were to be fought and won, it must be by his own (Arjun's) valour and that of Bhima and of other such heroes on their side. Krishna was an unfailing friend of theirs, an invaluable ally in his own way. But he must be discounted in any military calculation and when Arjun saw the two armies, he must have compared their strengths, weighed possibilities of victory and felt overpowered by the sense of impending defeat. (The whole process might have been unconscious.)

Note the following in the light of the interpretation suggested above: "All the preparations for war are ready. That very morning, Yudhisthira looks at the impenetrable formation organised by Bhishma. *Trembling with fear, he tells Arjuna, "How can victory be ours in the face of such an army?"* Arjuna encourages his brother by quoting an ancient verse, "they, that are desirous of victory, conquer not so much by might and prowess as by truth, compassion, piety and virtue. Victory is certain to be where Kṛṣṇa is. . . . Victory is one of his attributes, so also is humility."<sup>11</sup> (*italics mine*) It is illuminating to see even Yudhisthira trembling with fear at the prospect of defeat ;

<sup>10</sup> "This noble and conscious cult of the teacher can hardly be found in other countries," Nicholas Roerich, "Chhandogya Upanishads" in K. B. Iyer (Ed.), *Art and Thought*, p. 195 ; "The most striking thing about the discipline of a student was his high reverence for the teacher." K. M. Kapadia, *Marriage and Family in India*, p. 28.

<sup>11</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 87.

even he was thinking of the outcome of war solely in terms of military victory or defeat. The assurance of Arjun is hypocritical. Who was Arjun to teach Yudhisthira that victory is not so much by might and prowess as by truth and virtue? The righteous, virtuous Yudhisthira, symbol of truth and morality had no faith in Krishna but the archer, bowman Arjun had! And Arjun clearly forgot all about the virtuousness of his cause when he said that the fight was for kingdom and wealth: "Alas, what a great sin have we resolved to commit in striving to slay our own people *through our greed for the pleasures of the Kingdom!*" (45) Yudhisthira was truthful enough to admit his doubt and see it clearly while Arjun had to keep on defending himself.

The claim that Arjun made for himself was compassion for his kinsmen and grief at the thought of killing them. And this so soon after his saying, "I wish to look at those who are assembled here, ready to fight and eager to achieve in battle what is dear to *the evil-minded son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.*" (23) Is it not curious and therefore inviting doubt that Arjun was overwhelmed with compassion and pity? By temperament, Yudhisthira and not Arjun should have been the victim of such feelings. There is hardly any evidence to believe that Arjun was so full of love that he could be merciful to both good and evil alike. And he knew that the Kauravas were evil just before he was overcome with pity and kindness for them. This sentiment is so incongruous in the breast of Arjun that it must be rejected outright as false or assumed.

Dr. Vasant G. Rele<sup>12</sup> makes an attempt to explain Arjun's mood on psychological lines. He argues that of all the brothers, Arjun was the only one who did not give any expression, in words or deeds, to the feeling of humiliation and anger, provoked by Yudhisthira's gambling them and their liberties away. Bhima gave vent to his anger in a storm of words when Duryodhan dragged Draupadi by hair. (Nakul and Sahadeo were too unformed to feel anything strongly for themselves.) Arjun, though

<sup>12</sup> *Bhagavad-Gita—An Exposition*, pp. 5-17.

enraged, not only kept himself in check but exercised restraint even on Bhima. The energy thus accumulated in him and when in the battle-field, he wanted to direct it to his enemies, conscience intervened and filled him with pity and grief.

Now, Dr. Rele does not make the important distinction between repression and suppression; throughout he has used suppression in the sense of repression. Arjun *did feel* the feelings of anger and humiliation and then controlled himself. Such an accumulated energy does not burst in upon a person from nowhere; by the fact of its having been experienced, such an energy is placed at the disposal of the mind for conscious use. Consciously experienced feelings, though intense and restrained, cannot bring about any crisis situation. At any rate, the author has no explanation as to why the conscience intervened in the manner it actually did. Mere repression or suppression is not enough to explain it.

And secondly, why should the conscience of Arjun alone interfere and fill him with pity? Is there any evidence to show that the conscience of the mighty warrior was so prohibitive in allowing him release of aggression? Here again, this would be more naturally expected in Yudhishthira. Such an unexpected reaction must be viewed with doubt.

From verse 32 to verse 37, there is the sentimental bewailing of having to kill his relatives and the fruitlessness of any acquisition after such destruction. Even granting tentatively the sincerity of this feeling, one is surprised that Arjun should have confronted the fact of destruction so realistically only in the battle-field. He was not an inferior person, devoid of imagination that he could have no idea of a reality before it actually came to pass. (And after all, imagination, along with rationality are the two most distinguishing characteristics of man.) What impaired the imagination of Arjun? Or rather, what suddenly caused his imagination to function? For, at the time he was filled with the thoughts of extensive destruction, no destruction had actually taken place, the war had not yet begun—he was visualising it mentally. Was it the prospect of his own defeat

and destruction that had charged his imagination?<sup>13</sup> Arjun behaved as if he was taken by complete surprise at the presence of his relatives in the Kaurava army. He must have certainly known who composed the Kaurava army much before Krishna brought the chariot between the two armies, because those who were not with them must have been with the Kauravas. But till he was certain of his own victory (as when he assured Yudhisthira), he was not sentimental about death and destruction. As soon as that prospect was reversed (by the unequal strength of the two armies), he was all sentimentality.

From verse 38 onwards, his arguments change from sentimentality to intellectuality, advancing sound, logical and objective reasons for avoiding war and destruction. He outlined the pivotal position of family in society and how war would kill men, make women loose, disrupt family and destroy society. Who can take exception to such a sensible view? But the truth or falsity of the argument is beside the point here. What matters is whether the argument (in itself sound) is being utilized for an ulterior end or is sincerely believed in. The range of arguments that Arjun armed himself with would very easily incline one to think that it was all rationalisation.

But no state of mind is so pure as to be ruled by any single emotion. The writer would open himself to the charge of artificial simplicity if he were to maintain that fear alone gripped Arjun's heart. There was guilt mixed with fear. Who was to take the responsibility for all the killing? And it must be remembered that while Arjun's feeling of compassion for the Kauravas is suspect, there were people in the Kaurava army, notably Bhishma, his grandfather and Dronacharya, his *guru*, whom he did love and respect deeply. To kill them, even to entertain the idea of their deaths, must have been very painful for him.<sup>14</sup> Kaurava army was not a set of scoundrels, evil-doers, who must, at any cost, be exterminated for the good of all but

<sup>13</sup> It is well known that when one's own self is faced with danger, the numbness goes and the organism is activated.

<sup>14</sup> "How shall I strike Bhishma and Droṇa who are worthy of worship, O Madhusūdana (Krṣṇa), with arrows in battle, O slayer of foes (Krṣṇa)?" (Ch. II, 4)

contained some priceless gems. To hate those whom one loves is always beset with problems. And Arjun did face the problem of not knowing how to resolve the conflicting claims upon himself—his 'duty' to fight and his unwillingness to kill those whom he held in high regard. But, of course, this must have played a comparatively minor part, for, if it were to be the major reason, Arjun would have stuck to it alone steadfastly and not covered a wide field of objections. Also, why should have such an important fact occurred to him only in the battle-field and not before?

But, whatever line of interpretation one might adopt, one thing stands out beyond all controversy—Arjun's integration had crumbled and he was so confused that he did not know what he should do and why he should do whatever he had to do. As a result of Krishna's teaching, Arjun emerged out of this mood, a man who knew what was to be done and why it should be done. There was no doubt, no confusion, no uncertainty. We shall follow the story of the re-integration of Arjun in the pages to come.

## CHAPTER II

In the beginning of the chapter, Arjun sank into complete passivity, abandoning all efforts to arrive at any decision of his own. He frankly told Krishna, ". . . With my mind bewildered about my duty, I ask Thee. Tell me, for certain, which is better. I am Thy pupil; teach me, who am seeking refuge in Thee." (7) There is a willing, unconcealed surrender of all autonomy on the part of Arjun to free himself from the tortures of doubt and to gain the strength of certitude. His bewilderment was so great that he was prepared to accept some one else's decision as his own. Contrast the above with the following words of Allport: "It is characteristic of the mature mind that it can act wholeheartedly even without absolute certainty. It can be sure without being cocksure."<sup>18</sup> And again, "We may then say that the mature religious sentiment is ordinarily fashioned in the workshop of doubt"<sup>19</sup> Krishna had no conception of any such

<sup>18</sup> G. W. Allport, *The Individual and his Religion*, p. 72.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

workshop. And, of course, Arjun had no taste for such a thing. He repeatedly demanded an absolutely certain answer: "With an apparently confused utterance thou seemst to bewilder my intelligence. *Tell (me) then decisively the one thing by which I can attain to the highest good.*" (Ch. III, 2) "Thou praisest, O Kṛṣṇa, the renunciation of works and against their unselfish performance. *Tell me for certain which one is the better of these two.*" (Ch. V, 1) Krishna himself does not appear to regard doubt as in any way useful or valuable. He told Arjun, "But the man who is ignorant, who has no faith, who is of a doubting nature, perishes. For the doubting soul, there is neither this world nor the world beyond nor any happiness." (Ch. IV, 40)

To the writer, Krishna appears to personify the authoritarian conscience, so well described by Erich Fromm: "In authoritarian systems the authority is made out to be fundamentally different from his subjects. He has powers not attainable by anyone else: magic, wisdom, strength, which can never be matched by his subjects. Whatever the authority's prerogatives are, whether he is the master of the universe or a unique leader sent by fate, the fundamental inequality between him and man is the basic tenet of the authoritarian conscience. One particularly important aspect of the uniqueness of the authority is the privilege of being the only one who does not follow another's will, but who himself wills; who is not a means but an end in himself; who creates and is not created."<sup>17</sup> Any number of verses could be quoted from the *Gītā* to answer the above description. (Of course, the clarity of this picture is vitiated by the theistic assumption of Krishna being the God incarnate. But this point has no validity in our psychological discussion.) Allport quotes with approval Fromm's distinction between an immature and a mature conscience: "The mark of an immature conscience, says Fromm, is its authoritarian nature. It is ridden by a sense of obedience, self-sacrifice, duty and resignation."<sup>18</sup> Although Allport takes exception to Fromm's generalisation (otherwise wholeheartedly subscribing to him) that a religious conscience, almost of necessity, is an authoritarian (immature)

<sup>17</sup> E. Fromm, *Man for Himself*, p. 149.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

conscience, he, nevertheless, agrees "that great religions have a way of turning into power systems that seize control of the youthful adherents conscience, . . ." <sup>19</sup> Allport hopes that it may be a temporary phase and "the individual in the course of his maturing may *rediscover* for himself the essential truths of his religion, and thus incorporate them into a wholly productive and rational conscience." <sup>20</sup> Of course, the hope of Allport that an authoritarian conscience, once implanted and enthroned, will allow maturity to so develop that it shall itself be overthrown, is very questionable. It is like expecting a totalitarian state or a dictatorial power to tolerate growth of democratic practices. The whole trouble with authoritarian conscience is that it does not allow maturity even to arise, much less see it grow. At any rate, if at all any maturity is to arise, it is only by facing doubt and depression, thereby providing new foundations for one's personality. Let us now see the attitude of the *Gītā* to depression. <sup>21</sup>

Depression of spirit is an affliction to which all mortals are heir. (It is this that makes the appeal of the *Gītā* so universal and so perennial.) Even depression of the crushing intensity like that of Arjun's has been experienced by quite a few stout hearts. To quote only two examples. Both Havelock Ellis and John Stuart Mill, at different stages in their lives, lost the sense of certainty, of order, of purpose in universe and existence became a pointless thing. (Of the many other names that come to mind, one thinks of Tolstoy who felt himself on the verge of an inner crisis for a long time before he took the final plunge.) Havelock Ellis writes, "I definitely rejected as intellectually out of court the whole supernatural foundations of Christianity and miraculous theology in general. This did not lead to active hostility or to any sense of liberation from restraints. My life remained the same. But I was conscious of loss. The supernatural universe had melted away and I was without a spiritual home. There were moods of desolation in spite of constant and varied mental

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>21</sup> "Depression first maims the mind and then kills the body." Champion, *Racial Proverbs (Hindi)*, p. 399.

activities."<sup>22</sup> Mill was a victim of it in a much acuter form: "In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you were looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!". At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for."<sup>23</sup> But they lived with their depression. There was no urgent necessity to get out of this mood, unpleasant though, in the extreme, it must have been. The re-integration of personality after depression depends upon how it has been taken and how it has been gone through. Only when the disappearance of old foundations are unprotestingly submitted to, that new foundations—surer, securer, stronger—are substituted in due course. Anxious haste will not provide it. Only when the self remains alone for sometime that it develops its own resources with which it can weather rough storms. But Arjun had no patience, he wanted immediate deliverance from doubt and therefore 'certainty' could only be imposed from without, it could never grow from within. Arjun wanted to get out of the "dark night of the soul" as soon as possible.

From verse 11 to verse 30, Krishna impressed upon Arjun the immortality of the soul and the destructibility of only the exterior, the mortal frame. The disregard Krishna shows towards the form, the manifestation, draws out a strong protest in our minds. Even if it is granted that soul is immortal and body mortal, does it mean that one can kill anyone at any time? And this is exactly what Krishna wanted to convince Arjun of: "For to the one that is born death is certain and certain is birth for the one that has died. Therefore for what is unavoidable thou shouldst not grieve." (27) This is capable of causing incalcul-

<sup>22</sup> H. Ellis, *The Genius of Europe*, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, p. 77.

able social harm if the particular form in which life expresses itself is so totally ignored.

From verse 31 to verse 38, the warrior's caste-duty to fight was enjoined upon Arjun by Krishna. This bristles with difficulties. Firstly, what is caste? How is it determined? Krishna himself has answered that caste is determined by qualities, not by birth: "The fourfold order was created by Me according to the divisions of quality and work." (Ch. IV, 13) And what happens if qualities themselves change, as most certainly they do? What happens to the caste then? Logically, there can be no permanent membership of any one caste for an individual, for it implies denying all possibilities of evolution or degeneration in the personal qualities of a person. Although the point is crucial for the whole ethics of the *Gītā*, it has been very nebulously treated by Krishna.

From the theory of Karma (action and reaction), it follows that whatever one does in present life will create new bondage for future life. Since action cannot be avoided in life, at least its responsibility must be avoided by the individual. This is a dilemma from which Arjun tried to escape and the way shown by Krishna is that one should do one's duty without any attachment to results. Now, what is duty and how is it determined? "Further, having regard for thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter, there exists no greater good for a Kṣatriya than a battle enjoined by duty." (31) As Albert Schweitzer writes, "And when he [Krishna] speaks of action, he never means more than the exercise of the activity dictated by caste, not subjective action proceeding from the impulses of the heart and self-chosen responsibilities."<sup>24</sup> So, duty is determined by the caste one belongs to and the caste one belongs to depends on the qualities one possesses. But there is no permanence about one's qualities. When Ashoka was overcome by the sight of bloodshed in the war, was he being dutiful or undutiful? From the point of view of the restricted caste-duty that Krishna has propounded, Ashoka

<sup>24</sup> A. Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, p. 188.

See S. Radhakrishnan's criticism of A. Schweitzer's thesis in his *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 64-110. Radhakrishnan is learnedly defensive of the Hindu point of view.

was undutiful in that a Kshatriya is not expected to feel remorseful at the sight of bloodshed; from the point of view of any higher morality, such compassionate feelings are only to be desired. (Why else should Ashoka be lauded?) Obviously, Krishna's argument is circuitous. To any earnest seeker, the question what is duty, has remained unanswered by Krishna. And knowing as we do its crucial importance, we shall not be wrong in regarding this as the fatal weakness of the *Gītā*.

Krishna was under a compulsion to rouse Arjun from his lethargy and inaction. He was prepared to employ any argument for this purpose; even the biting mechanism of social ridicule was not spared although it went directly counter to Krishna's main teaching. Even Radhakrishnan is constrained to remark, "Contrast this with the central teaching of the *Gītā* that one should be indifferent to praise and blame."<sup>25</sup> And Krishna was not without his war-mongering when he said, "Happy are the Kṣatriyas, O Pārtha (Arjuna), for whom such a war comes of its own accord as an open door to heaven." (32) So war is not a hell on this earth but an open door to heaven, at least for the Kshatriyas, no matter how much of a living hell it is for others.

Verse 47 lays down a very important teaching of the *Gītā*: "To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction."<sup>26</sup> Why does not one have the right to the fruits of his action? A believer in God might reply that it is not within one's power to get the result one desires, it is God's will that decides. Even if this authority of God is granted, why should one *surrender* one's right to the fruits of one's own labour? What convinces one of the desirability of such surrender?

It might also be asked as to what are the gains of this method? Who profits and how is the individual elevated? It must be admitted that such a teaching as this curbs the selfish tendencies a great deal. When loss and gain is not the motive,

<sup>25</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā*, p. 118.

<sup>26</sup> "That matchless remedy is renunciation of fruits of action." M. K. Gandhi, *Gita the Mother*, p. 6.

to what is the selfishness to be tethered? But obviously Krishna did not have this moral point of view in his mind. Krishna has nowhere shown his concern with selflessness as an ideal to be striven for, unless selflessness means complete annihilation of the self.

And yet, in spite of the difficulties pointed out, the verse continues to exert its fascination, as judged by its frequent quoting by the Hindus. Wherein lies its attraction? The attraction of this verse is linked up with the attraction of the *Gītā* itself. And it lies in the fact that if there is no personal motive behind an action, the doer cannot be held responsible for his own action. The very surrender of the right to fruits of one's action confers on the doer freedom from all responsibility. And is not the relief great, even if the price be greater?<sup>27</sup> "In the Bhagavad-gītā, on the other hand, man plays a part in the drama from a blind sense of duty, without seeking to find out its meaning, and, along with that, the meaning of his own action."<sup>28</sup> And again Schweitzer writes, "Krishna then dares to confess the simple truth that if the freedom of the will be denied, there can be no question of guilt."<sup>29</sup> (Note the choice of words, "dares to confess.") So, freedom from guilt, responsibility and anxiety are the gains for the loss of the right to receive.

Although Allport believes that the idea of freedom of will must have limits, he nevertheless acknowledges that "the degree and type of freedom a man has, depends in part upon what he believes. If he thinks he is hopelessly bound he will not exert himself, and if he fails to exert himself he will not improve his lot. If, on the contrary, he believes that there are doors that may be opened and that lead to a fuller realization of values, he

<sup>27</sup> "What the individual really wants is rest and peace and surcease and release from the interminable conflict within himself and between himself and his group. Death offers this, to be sure; so, momentarily, do sleep, excessive sexual participation, alcohol, and drugs; some illness do; insanity might; *losing the self might help*, as might a hysterically exaggerated masochistic ecstasy; and so would a return to the mother's womb." (Italics mine) James W. Woodard, *Relation of Personality Structure to the Structure of Culture*, *American Sociological Review*, III, 1938, p. 645.

<sup>28</sup> A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

will explore, discover, enter."<sup>30</sup> Allport frankly admits that "it is upon this rock [meaning the problem of evil], and upon the reefs of determinism, that most religious sentiments are wrecked in their quest for maturity."<sup>31</sup> One recalls the whole discussion of freedom and the mechanisms of escape by E. Fromm in his brilliant book *The Fear of Freedom*.

The last few verses of the chapter are extremely important. It is here that one gets the description of the characteristics of a perfect sage. At the outset, desires are declared to be obstacles for the attainment of peace of mind. Desires prevent concentration, they distract, they dissipate, they mislead. Each one of us can partially confirm this description of desires from the storehouse of his own experiences. Every time a person is hurt, he keenly realises how easily he could have saved himself the disappointment if only he had not desired. Desires then, no doubt, cause one pain and man has always faced the problem of not knowing how to reduce it. "Desires are, for all practical purposes, unlimited and insatiable, and therefore any ethics which does not recognise the necessity of putting restraint upon naïve desire is inherently absurd. On the other hand, it is impossible to distrust every impulse, for the only conclusion then is to commit suicide."<sup>32</sup> And did not Krishna imply psychological suicide when he said, "When a man puts away *all* the desires of his mind, O Pārtha (Arjuna), and when his spirit is content in itself, then is he called stable in intelligence." (55) What remains when *all* the desires have been put away? Peace or emptiness? unless, of course, peace itself is another name for emptiness. What is the worth of such a peace? Is it peace of life or peace of death? For, what is the picture of Krishna's peace and calmness? "He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrows and is free from eager desire amid pleasures, he from whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence." (56) A mind that is without feeling, without sensitivity, that has hardened and gone cold is the mind of the sage of settled intelligence. "He who is without affection

<sup>30</sup> G. W. Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Lippman, *A Preface to Morals*, p. 165.

on any side, who does not rejoice or loathe as he obtains good or evil, his intelligence is firmly set (in wisdom)." (57)

Discussing the lack of active love in Hindu ethics, what Schweitzer writes about Buddha applies well to the *Gītā* also. He writes, "For the Buddha's monks there can be no question of active love, if for no other reason, because it assumes that one loves something in the world and so in some way gives one's heart to it. But this would mean a limitation of freedom from earthly cares. How pathetic is the Buddha's saying: 'Those who love nothing in the world are rich in joy and free from pain.' To a father who has lost his little boy, he knows nothing better to say than: 'What one loves brings woe and lamentations.'" <sup>33</sup> Dixon quotes this very sentence of Buddha ("Those who love ... free from pain") and remarks, "This is a strange richness: it dispenses with love."<sup>34</sup> And it dispenses with a thing whose value is far from unimportant: "the security that comes from being loved and from giving love is the groundwork for wholesome existence at any age of life."<sup>35</sup> The stricture of Dr. Suttie on modern science as "flight from tenderness" is far more applicable to the ancient *Gītā*.

So, the equanimity of mind is attained by refusing to feel for any person or object.<sup>36</sup> Is this a real equanimity? Not to be

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 109.

<sup>34</sup> W. M. Dixon, *The Human Situation*, p. 201.

<sup>35</sup> G. W. Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>36</sup> "To withdraw from human contact is to avoid further frustration and to avoid the intense depression which human beings experience as a result of hating the person whom they most dearly love and need. Withdrawal is thus felt to be the better of two bad alternatives. Unfortunately, it proves to be a blind alley, since no further development is then possible. For progress in human relations the individual must take the other road, in which he learns to tolerate his contradictory feelings and to bear the anxiety and depression which go with them. But experience shows that once a person has taken refuge in the relative painlessness of withdrawal he is reluctant to change course and to risk the turmoil of feeling and misery which attempting relationships brings with it." (italics mine) F. Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, p. 68.

The criticism of lack of love as a motivating force does not apply to the entire body of Hindu thought. Union with God through love and devotion (*bhakti-marg*) is a well-recognised and often practised method. But the criticism may still apply in that primarily God is the sole object of love, and only secondarily, it is given to fellow human beings, or to any living being.

moved is not to have attained equanimity but is the desensitization of the soul. To be moved but *not to be swept away* is the real equanimity. Such a mind has felt the force of feeling to the full but has not yielded to it. But Krishna was so afraid of desires that he would not advise anyone to feel it ("...his impetuous senses will carry off his mind by force."). For him, to feel is to yield. Such is the strength of mind according to him!

Even when it is conceded that desires are strong, why should desires alone lead the self? Are there not other parts of mind that can hold desires in check or at least reduce its force? "Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul."<sup>27</sup> Psychoanalysis has acquainted us with the picture of the primitive and infantile mind where feelings reign supreme because the conscious, rational part, oriented and adapted to objective reality, has either not developed at all or has developed too little to cope up with the intensity of feelings. Krishna's psychotic concept of mind can only lead to wholesale banning of emotions.

"I am indifferent to all born things; there is none whom I hate, none whom I love." (Bhagavadgītā, ix.29. Tr. L. D. Barnett)

These words are placed in the mouth of a god, but it is a human ideal that they express; . . . ; and the same poem elsewhere extolls the same inhumanly complete Detachment as the hall-mark, not of divinity, but of perfection in the soul of a human being.

"He whose mind is undismayed in pain, who is freed from longings for pleasure, from whom passion, fear and wrath have fled, is called a man of abiding prudence, a saintly man. He who is without affection for ought, and whatever fair or foul fortune may betide neither rejoices in it nor loathes it, has wisdom abidingly set."

<sup>27</sup> Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*, p. 47.

"The man whose every motion is void of love and purpose, whose works are burned away by the fire of knowledge, the enlightened call 'learned.'"

"The learned grieve not for them whose lives are fled nor for them whose lives are not fled." (Bhagavadgītā, ii.56-7; iv.19; ii.11).

To the Indic sage's mind this heartlessness is the adamant core of philosophy; and the same conclusion was reached independently by the Hellenic philosophers as a result of following likewise to the bitter end a parallel line of escape from life."<sup>38</sup>

Krishna has confused between feeling on the one hand and attachment to sense-objects on the other. One can keep one's feelings intact, unimpaired and yet not necessarily attach oneself to any object. This is a position Krishna could never have understood. For him, if there is feeling, there will be a compelling, irresistible urge to attach it to an object. We know it as a matter of every day experience that feeling is not being. Between what we feel and what we actually do, there is often a world of difference. But Krishna would have admitted of no such possibility. "Desires may prove to be as resistless as the most powerful external forces. They may lift us into glory or hurl us into disgrace." It is distressing to find even Radha-krishnan, so well aware of the advances in knowledge since the *Gītā* was first composed, echoing the same thought: "The root of all evil is desire, which determines will and act. Desires torment the soul, bind it in chains, reducing it to a servitude. They darken and blind the intellect."<sup>39</sup> But why? Does not desire include both love and hate? Is not desire the moving force behind intellect? And what happens to the conscience in the mind? Does not the process of growth imply development of conscience and a keener perception of reality, together resulting in better control?<sup>40</sup> Moreover, if the conscience is weak,

<sup>38</sup> A. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. VI, p. 146.

<sup>39</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 106.

<sup>40</sup> "It is in accordance with the course of our development that external compulsion is gradually internalized, in that a special mental function, man's super-ego, takes it under its jurisdiction....This strengthening of the super-ego is a highly valuable psychological possession for culture." S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 18.

should not the attempt be directed at strengthening it? (The writer, however, does not wish to convey the impression that conscience and feelings are always in conflict with each other. But in most cases and to a considerable extent in all cases, the situation is no doubt conflicting.) The possibility of the feelings themselves becoming moral in content is far from ruled out, as when Confucius said, "At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right." Conscience and desire beat in unison; one is not the watcher and the other watched. But for such a remarkable result to happen, feelings should be brought out more and more into the open; Krishna's mortal dread of desires will only take one in the opposite direction.

Krishna has outlined a chain of reactions which originates in attachment to sense-objects and ends in the destruction of the individual:

When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger. (62)

From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory; the destruction of intelligence and from the destruction of intelligence he perishes. (63)

In the above chain-reaction, there is a vital omission. The impression that Krishna gave of attachment leading to anger is absolutely wrong; what leads to anger is not attachment but frustration or disappointment. And attachment to objects only opens up the possibility of disappointment. What is casually omitted by Krishna constitutes the crux of the problem. What is Krishna's attitude to frustration in life? How does he regard the role of frustration? Could frustration ever serve any good purpose? It is clear that Krishna could not have taken any but the most negative stand on these issues. ("Let that be known by the name of yoga, this disconnection from union with pain.") (Ch. VI, 23) The chain of reactions when completed and made explicit would run thus: desire—attachment—disappointment—

anger—destruction. And for Krishna, there is an inevitability about each step, one must end in the other.

This again is a primitive and infantile concept of mind where no other consideration can be introduced to deflect the course.

Today, the role of frustration is better known and appreciated. If frustration is tolerated and lived through, it brings about valuable changes in the personality. Not only is a better adjustment effected but the desires themselves become realistic in their demands. From fantastic, fanciful demands, both on oneself (like extreme ambition) as well as on others (like complete compliance) to considerate, reasonable and limited demands (and therefore more capable of fulfilment) is the line of development. And this is brought about by the series of inevitable frustrations that one experiences from childhood onwards. The whole development depends upon how one reacts to frustration and this is considered so important today that the capacity to bear frustration is taken as the mark of maturity. When a person retaliates, becomes aggressive as a result of frustration, it shows inner insecurity.

When Krishna jumped from desire to anger, he had in his mind this impoverished and resourceless individual. And, he, of course, had no idea of how to make these individuals strong, secure and resourceful except by asking them to give up desires so that the subsequent consequences do not follow. But by keeping away from danger, one does not become stronger to face it.

The teaching has two fatal weaknesses. First, it never prepares an individual to face and bear the numerous frustrations and disappointments of life. And, second, by demanding total renunciation of *all* desires, one is insulated from one's own feeling. Nowhere does Krishna show even a faint appreciation of the usefulness of pain, of frustration, of sorrow. And they all have their value in the human psyche. Pain and pleasure are intimately related and because Krishna cannot have his individuals tolerate pain, he cannot have them enjoy pleasure. As

Khalil Gibran writes, "The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain."<sup>41</sup> With all desires renounced, both sorrow and joy abjured, what remains? "Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy. Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced."<sup>42</sup> And even the poet prays, "Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows."<sup>43</sup> But the seductive attraction of the *Gita* lies in what Toynbee writes, "if that is sweet, it must be sweeter still to be totally insensible: to know nothing of others feelings, besides feeling nothing oneself."<sup>44</sup>

The writer is of the opinion that not a small part of the serenity and contentment of the Hindu character is due to this desensitization and alienation from the self. It is a matter of common observation that as compared to the number of problems and their gravity, the anxiety and perturbation to be seen is markedly less. Disease and poverty are constant companions. And yet there is no panic, no anxious haste to solve these problems. It is a task to rouse the masses, to enlist their co-operation for their own betterment. They seem to have befriended the very misery which should have been sought to be removed. It could not be that the anxiety and panic associated with starvation and disease have been felt to the full and then the mind has arrived at a stable, settled adjustment and moves unhurried, knowing full well what problems there are. It could not be because it is difficult to feel the panic in its intensity and yet not show it at all and if such a mastery were attained, there would have been evidences of reserves of energy, even if hectic activity was avoided. There is nothing to suggest that the Hindus in the mass are like a relaxed lion.

The only satisfactory explanation is that they do not realise fully the gravity of the situation; the insulation that Krishna preached is being practised. The calmness is because they do not face the anxiety and not because they have mastered it. The full impact is not received by the self because the feeling system

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali*, p. 28.

<sup>44</sup> A. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

of the self is impaired. When a mental patient brings about such a split in his personality that he walks unfeelingly into danger, seemingly unafraid, he is heroic only externally—really he is a coward. And something of this pathology has become a part of the make-up of the Hindu mind, the origin of which could partially be traced to the 'sublime' teachings of Krishna.

It is needless to point out that what Krishna says is not only psychologically unsound but is not even practicable. Schweitzer has examined the entire course of Indian thought from the point of view of world and life affirmation and world and life negation. He has observed that though the attitude of the Indian thought is one of world and life negation, the very process of living has extracted concessions in favour of world and life affirmation: "Passing from concessions to concessions, which have to be made if men who live the world-view of world and life negation are to remain alive, the decision is reached that what really matters is not so much actual abstention from action as that men should act in a spirit of non-activity and in inner freedom from the world so that action may lose all significance."<sup>43</sup> And this raises a great problem for ethics in that such an ethics is devoid of any motive of love because love is bondage. Schweitzer is correct in saying that "it really ought to demand of man that, as soon as he reaches the conviction that Non-Being is to be regarded as higher than Being, he shall quit existence by a self-chosen death."<sup>44</sup> That the Hindus have continued to live and love is no tribute to the *Gītā* but is the vindication of the instinctive will-to-live. But the *Gītā* should be held responsible for the many partial suicides of the Hindus, manifest in their diminished zest for life.

It might be said that "it is all very well to talk about being the captain of your soul. It is hard, and only a few heroes, saints and geniuses have been the captains of their souls for any extended period of their lives. Most men, after a little freedom, have preferred authority with the consoling assurances and the

<sup>43</sup> A. Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

economy of effort which it brings."<sup>47</sup> One knows that freedom is a heavy cross to bear. But this is the only cross that is worth bearing.<sup>48</sup> Let all effort go into making one capable of bearing it. It might be hard to be the captain of one's soul but that ideal must so exert that everyday one is more of a captain of one's soul. Difficulties can demand compromises in the method or extent of attaining an ideal.<sup>49</sup> But there can be no argument for giving up an ideal just because it is difficult of attainment. As Jung well points out, "Personality as a complete realisation of the fullness of our being is an unattainable ideal. But unattainability is no counter argument against an ideal for ideals are only signposts, never goals."<sup>50</sup> So long as the ideal itself remains demonstrably superior, exertion must continue. The trouble and pity with Krishna is that he had no idea of any such ideal.

The defence is possible that the function of religion everywhere is to assuage guilt and reduce anxiety—it grants peace and keeps torments at bay. But the teachings of Krishna cannot be spared criticism on this ground. It is claimed by the protagonists of the *Gītā* that it is "the art and theory of the internal life of man, so far as it depends on man himself and on what is permanent in the nature of things."<sup>51</sup> *Gītā* therefore must be tested by the standard of the claims made on its behalf. The test must be whether the *Gītā* helps a person to attain maturity or not; the test of maturity itself being independence, confidence, inner resourcefulness and the capacity to feel and bear the whole gamut of feelings and emotions, without being swept away.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Lippman, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> "You fear probably, that he will not stand the test? Well, anyhow, let us be hopeful. It is at least something to know that one is thrown on one's own resources. One learns then to use them properly." S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, p. 86.

<sup>49</sup> The position is something like Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Expediency as a method in politics had always been practised. But Machiavelli alone gave expediency the status of an ideal. Similarly, not to feel pain has always been attempted but the *Gītā* is the most respectable attempt to make it an ideal position.

<sup>50</sup> C. G. Jung, *The Integration of Personality*, p. 287.

<sup>51</sup> A. N. Whitehead. Quoted by G. W. Allport, *op. cit.*, p. 69. See the quotation of Aurobindo in the beginning of the chapter.

## CHAPTER III

In this chapter, entitled Karma Yoga or the Method of Yoga, Krishna emphasises the following:—

- (1) The inescapable obligation to do action,
- (2) the detachment with which it should be performed,
- (3) the snare of the senses, and
- (4) the danger of desires.

Krishna's insistence on work was not because he saw any great merit in it but just because it cannot be helped. "For no one can remain even for a moment without doing work, every one is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature." (5) Is not this a very negative attitude to work? And this negative attitude remains unrelieved when the work has to be performed in an attitude of detachment. For, whatever Krishna might have said, it passes comprehension how energy can be mobilized without any focussing interest, unless, of course, it is that one has to be attached to the idea of detachment itself. But this does not improve the situation from the *Gita* point of view. So long as there is activity for a result, even if the result be the attainment of detached attitude, it is bondage. The promise of freedom from responsibility will be withdrawn as soon as desire for any result is introduced. Without interest there can be no zest, and activity can be carried out only in a mechanical way. "Having no desires, with his heart and self under control, giving up all possessions, *performing action by the body alone*, he commits no wrong." (Ch. IV, 21) Discussing the impossibility of attaining total detachment, Toynbee remarks, "As an intellectual achievement it is imposing; as a moral achievement it is overwhelming; but it has a disconcerting moral corollary; for perfect Detachment casts out Pity, and therefore also Love, as inexorably as it purges away all the evil passions."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> A. Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

This difficulty is occasioned not so much by the idea of detachment as by the demand that desires should be given up. "Resigning all thy works to Me, with thy consciousness fixed in the Self, being free from desire and egoism, fight, delivered from thy fever." (30) If this injunction was not there, detachment could yet acquire a positive meaning. Selfless ideals could be the goals to which energy may be directed. But even the selfless ideal is chosen by the self. *And a self that is without any desire is without any capacity or need to make a choice.*

Krishna outlined a two-fold way of life, "the path of knowledge for men of contemplation and that of works for men of action." The general orientation of the Hindu mind is towards contemplation but not so much as to explain adequately the insufficiency of action. Could it be that the very contradictory nature of insistence on action but the spirit in which it should be performed arrests the release of energy? For it is certain that the energy of the Hindus is locked up somewhere. Contemplative activity could not be so deep and sustained for most of the Hindus as to use up all their energies. And there should be no difficulty in energy expressing itself in action. Action comes more easily and naturally to anyone and yet, if it is not very much in evidence, is it fanciful to say that there is disturbance in the release process?

Between them, sex and aggression contain the maximum of energy since they are the strongest of all instincts. The value of sex for race-preservation and that of aggression for self-preservation is so high that nature has invested them with extra force. Now, we have seen that desires as a whole have been inveighed against but Krishna was most emphatic in his warning against anger and sex. (And naturally so, since they are the strongest.) How is one to negate the tremendous forces of these impulses in one's mind? Conscious control is, of course, ruled out because Krishna had no idea of such a control. Even when these impulses are given up in the *Ghṛā* way, the most that can happen is to prevent the conscious experiencing of these desires. Impulses so deeply implanted by nature cannot be rooted out and thrown

away.<sup>53</sup> What is not in the consciousness is not necessarily absent from the whole mind. One of the successes of psychoanalysis, accepted on all hands, is to have shown that to "thrust strivings out of awareness, or not to admit them into awareness does not prevent them from existing and from being effective."<sup>54</sup> It stands to reason that if such powerful impulses have to be kept in check, equal, if not stronger forces will have to be applied in order to achieve the result. Now, imagine the loss of energy suffered on two counts: first, impulses are not allowed expression and second, they have to be kept in check. Is it any wonder then that the energy available for action is severely curtailed?

It may be asked that if this is so, how did the Hindus build a civilisation? How could such severe curtailment of energy help them create a culture of the richness and variety that it undoubtedly is? The writer's answer to this very pertinent question is that culture is always created by the elite in society and for some reason, they obey laws different from what the generality of mankind does.<sup>55</sup> Where privation and frustration would almost crush an average person, a Van Gogh or a Gauguin gives his best. Suffering cleanses them and privation purifies them. But this, of course, is not to say that these geniuses would answer the description of the Yogis of the *Gītā*. They would invariably depart from the description in the strength of their passion, in the depth of the feelings that gnaw their hearts. The point here is that culture is created by an aristocracy of men and their storehouse of energy and inspiration is not affected by Krishna's teaching in the manner in which it affects the vast majority of people. And we are concerned with the people here.

<sup>53</sup> Consider, for example, the cases of such celibates who are suddenly filled with sensual desire. (It happens to Papnasi in Anatole France's *Thais*.) If sensuality was rooted out or exterminated, impotency would follow and to guard oneself against temptations would be unnecessary. And yet the *brahmacharies* are always engaged in keeping strict vigil over themselves.

<sup>54</sup> Hypnotism demonstrates dynamic unconscious with greater obvious convincingness.

<sup>55</sup> "It thus fittingly recognises the historical fact that the great, liberating deeds of world history have come from leading personalities and never from the inert mass that is secondary at all times and needs the demagogue if it is to move at all." C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 281; "I cannot escape from the conclusion that the great ages of progress have depended upon a small number of individuals of transcendent ability." Bertrand Russell, *In Praise of Idleness*, p. 164.

The caution of the snare of the senses has undoubtedly exerted a healthy influence on Hindu character. It has acted as a check on relentless pursuit of materialistic and sensual goals. An all-absorbing interest in the objects of the senses is no doubt under restraint here. The transitoriness of sensual pleasures and the insatiableness of materialistic acquisitions is undeniable, no matter what sense of fullness they give at the moment of satisfaction. If then *artha* and *kama* do not become ends in themselves, it is as it should be.

Foreigners are often struck, not so much by the religiosity and other-worldliness of the Hindus, as by their gross materialism.<sup>56</sup> One need not deny the truthfulness of such observation but the writer feels that it is more of a surface reality. If the materialism of the Hindus is seen against the background of their poverty, a proper appreciation will emerge. As pointed out earlier, the absence of anxiety and panic is partially due to insulation or alienation. But a tempered emphasis on materialistic pursuits is not without its important role in bringing about the total result. Krishna's teachings have contributed, in a great measure, in creating the climate of opinion wherein the transitoriness of sensual pleasures and the possibility of happiness from within are realised.

"He who finds his happiness within, his joy within and likewise his light only within, that yogin becomes divine and attains to the beatitude of God." (Ch. V, 24)

The Hindus owe their strengths as well as their weaknesses to this small but extraordinarily powerful book.

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<sup>56</sup> "That which the European notices at first in India is the superficially perceived corporeality, or attachment to the material world." C. G. Jung, "On the Psychology of Eastern Meditation" in K. B. Iyer (Ed.), *Art And Thought*, p. 170.

## CHAPTER V

"Art is the right hand of nature. The latter has only given us being; the former has made us men."

—SCHILLER,

*Fiesco*, II, 1784.

"Literature is 'The expression of a nation's mind in writing.'"

—CHANNING,

*Remarks on American Literature.*

"The claim of the film to have reached an artistic maturity rests, then, on such achievements as these—that is, on its national qualities, on its mature study of human character and the spirit of places and peoples, on its own unique form of visual drama, and on its peculiar powers of creating its own poetic experience."

—ROGER MANVELL,

*The Film And The Public*, p. 95.

## ANALYSIS OF FILMS

The use of imaginative material for the analysis of a culture and for the understanding of its members has not only been employed for long but has even been preferred by some to other methods of studying national character. Literature in its various forms has so far been the main line of research. As a medium that seeks to express the day-dreams, the reveries, the world of wishes and fantasies, written word occupies a solid, unchallengeable position. There have been writers of genius who have seen so profoundly into the lives of their peoples and have expressed it so well that the passage of time has done little to reduce their worth. Whether it is Homer in Greece, Shakespeare in England, Dante in Italy, Goethe in Germany, or Kalidas and Tulsidas in India, they all belong to that group of individuals who have made literature at once the inexhaustible source and the unfailing mirror of life.

Ernest Barker has discussed, at length, the importance of literature in the study of national character, and has devoted a chapter to it in his book on the subject. He writes, "The literature embodied in the language of any nation is one of the moulds of its life, and one of the influences which shape its development. It flows into the national genius, and affects its course and its current. The reverse is also in some measure true; and it may be argued that literature follows the direction and obeys the temper of national life."<sup>1</sup> It might be objected that literature is too much the product of imagination, too removed from the facts of life to possess either any representative capacity or

<sup>1</sup> E. Barker, *National Character*, p. 190.

moulding force. To this, Barker has well replied that the imaginary characters of literature tend to have an influence over the people and they thereby become real: "There are laws of imitation in virtue of which we tend to follow the suggestion not only of actual, but also of imaginary persons; and this is one of the causes of the power of literature."<sup>2</sup> James Sutherland, in his article on literature in the volume *The Character of England*, gives a very affirmative answer to the question whether a foreigner, well-read in English literature, will be able to understand the Englishman any better. He goes on to say that the foreigner "will also find us unconsciously mirrored in our newspapers."<sup>3</sup> This, of course, is not to say that literature is an easy and simple path to the understanding of as complex a phenomenon as the mental life of a nation. Far from it, the very variety of literature serves to dispel any homogenising in the direction of discovering a typical character. "The Englishman, then, may be known and judged by his literature, but the evidence is very extensive, and often, it would seem contradictory."<sup>4</sup> Despite these difficulties, the value of literature for such a study as the present one doubtless remains. If for no other reason, the unity of minds that literature makes possible in a nation, by providing common content or substance of thought, will alone entitle it to careful attention for national character studies.<sup>5</sup>

In recent years, however, literature has lost its claim to be the only projection of a nation's life. Increasingly, movies are occupying the position that once, almost exclusively, belonged to literature. Thus writes Roger Manvell, "The strength of an art is measured by its best work. That the film is a fine, well matured, expressive medium is proved by the wealth of its product during the twenty years following 1934. . . . Can either the novel or the drama begin to rival the film in depth as well as in wealth of creative production these past twenty years?

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>3</sup> J. Sutherland, "Literature" in E. Barker (Ed.), *The Character of England*, p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>5</sup> Otto Klineberg (*Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 10, 1944) mentions the research of Lerner in which the latter has analysed the content of recent articles in German psychological journals and finds evidence for the maladjusted character of what passes for scientific thinking in Germany.

Though one must admit that many of the great films are adaptations of plays and novels upon which they can occasionally be said to improve."<sup>6</sup> In her article on the Japanese cinema, entitled "Tragedy is a favourite theme", Marie Seton writes, "Japanese cinema presents a unique and astonishing characteristic when compared with the cinema of other nations: few films, whether costume or modern, have happy endings. In film after film the central character dies, or lovers are parted by inexorable fate. The cinema elsewhere has tried to evade such tragic climaxes even when called for by the logic of the story. But in Japan tragedy is not only acceptable but "box office." The Japanese, an emotional people for all their formal behaviour, like to weep. Though the explanation for tragic endings to films may lie deeper."<sup>7</sup>

The box-office appeal of movies and sale of books are not comparable indices to their effective popularity and use. With ticket bought, a movie is far oftener seen (at least in India) than a book is read after its purchase. Strangely enough, by the combination of contradictory processes of passive mode of enjoyment and the active excitation of sound and sight, the film acquires tremendous popularity. If nothing else, the sheer difference in time between the processes of seeing and reading gives incomparable advantage to the film. In fact, books of merit, not excepting classics, have been and are being filmed. By the very range and reaching out of its appeal, the movies must necessarily embody the fantasy life of a sufficiently large number of people. In their social study of England, Rowntree and Lavers observe, "The most impressive fact about the cinema is its immense power for good or evil that results from its staggering popularity."<sup>8</sup> In terms of representativeness, therefore, movies have a place all their own.

India is no exception to this general rule. The *Film Enquiry Committee* (1951) has worked out the number of annual attend-

<sup>6</sup> Roger Manvell, *The Film and the Public*, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> *Sunday Times*, 11th August, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> B. S. Rowntree and G. R. Lavers, *English Life And Leisure*, p. 256.

ance at 60 crores.<sup>9</sup> This estimate, they themselves admit, is rather conservative, calculated at estimated occupancy of 40% of seating accommodation and of more than two shows a day. A trade publication puts the annual figure of attendance at 73 crores. Since 1951, the number must have increased. Considering the poverty of the country, the figure must be adjudged large. Besides, widespread illiteracy removes the printed word as any sort of effective competitor of cinema for the vast majority of Indians. A Rowntree and Lavers in India would have presumably found the popularity of films still more staggering.

A protest is possible that too neat a separation has been made between literature and films, as if they have nothing to do with each other. The writer has no intention of insisting upon this separation beyond what the obvious difference in the nature of the two mediums demand. He has another reason for not making too much of this distinction: the choice of films, in some cases, has been determined by their prior popularity as works of literature. To have reviewed selectively all the pictures produced by the second greatest film industry in the world<sup>10</sup> for the purpose of analysis would have been an enormous task. Besides, such a lengthy procedure is not quite necessary. Although Wolfenstein and Leites write that they "have looked in French films for recurrent patterns of plot and character; such recurrences, which would seem to be not wholly intended, appear to reflect feelings and attitudes typical of a culture,"<sup>11</sup> the writer is not inclined to attach as much importance to the mere fact of the recurrence of a theme. To be exact, importance should doubtless be given to the theme or plot that constantly or very often recurs but other themes, less recurrent and persistent, should not be ignored. It may very well be that a less recurrent theme reveals something much deeper lying than do the themes that recur more often. As with an individual, so may it well be with a culture that the innermost part is revealed inadvertently by some small indications here or there.

<sup>9</sup> *Report of the Film Enquiry Committee, 1951*, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>11</sup> M. Wolfenstein and N. Leites, "Plot and Character in Selected French Films: An Analysis of Fantasy" in R. Métraux and M. Mead (Eds.), *Themes in French Culture*, p. 89.

So, selection of films had to be made on less objective basis, and personal choice played a part that may not be considered very desirable. But there were certain safe guides to go by; Sarat Chandra Chatterji<sup>12</sup> was one such author. A writer in Bengali, he was exceedingly popular with the Bengali-reading audience. When his books were translated into various Indian languages, he proved equally popular. "His works have been translated into all leading Indian languages and have not only gone through several editions, but quite a few of them have been best sellers."<sup>13</sup> Quite a few of his stories have been filmed, both in Hindi as well as in Bengali. And almost all have proved great success. It is such stories of his that are here employed for the purpose of analysis.

The above source has been supplemented by films produced in Bengal. It may be easily conceded that though Bombay is the major centre of the film industry, the great majority of quality-pictures have come from Bengal. There are people, often elderly, who do not normally care for pictures but would keenly regret missing a picture, produced by New Theatres, Ltd., Bengal. New Theatres has exercised an altogether peculiar fascination on the minds of discriminating Indian cinema-going public. In her study of Indian films, Panna Shah writes, "Bengal too had its strings of producers, but the most noted company which was later to establish a high standard in film production was New Theatres, Ltd."<sup>14</sup> *Filmindia's* cryptic review will further confirm the point: "Chota Bhai revives New Theatres' old glory."<sup>15</sup>

A few pictures produced in Bombay have also been included. As the financially important centre of the industry, Bombay has attracted quite a few artists from Bengal, some of whom have succeeded in preserving comparatively unsullied the high tradition they brought from there.

It is regretted that the writer's ignorance of language has prevented him from making any significant use of Marathi

<sup>12</sup> Died at the age of 62 on 16th January, 1908.

<sup>13</sup> Yusuf Meherally in H. Kabir, *Sarat Chandra Chatterji*, p. iii.

<sup>14</sup> Panna Shah, *Indian Film*, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

pictures, another source of quality-pictures in India. Films in South Indian languages also had to be left out for the same reason.

The scheme of treatment adopted here is partly borrowed from Wolfenstein and Leites' analysis of American, British and French films. The adoption of the same scheme provides the advantage of facilitating inter-cultural comparison. Wolfenstein and Leites have reduced all the many plots and sub-plots into a few basic human relationships, like lovers and loved ones, parents and children, killers and victims, etc. Not all of these themes have been examined here. The present writer would like to deal with the relationship of parents and children first. But before the topic of films is taken up, the writer may be allowed to digress, for a while, to some other pertinent material.

The theme of Œdipus complex no longer belongs to the orthodoxy of psychoanalysis. Pure or diluted and more often diluted than pure, Œdipus complex forms a part of the general psychological thinking of the time. Writing about Hinduism, Northrop observes that "A culture born of such a religion would hardly need a Freud."<sup>16</sup> It appears to be a singularly inapt remark. A culture that gives such a high place to mother and mother-figures can hardly entitle itself to Northrop's flattering remark. But a split between the tender and the erotic has been so thoroughly achieved that tenderness is freely lavished on mother-figures without any trace of eroticism and its consequent guilt. To be attached to mother and mother-figures is raised to the level of duty; far from attachment producing guilt or uneasiness, it is the absence of it that does so. Writing about the treatment of the relationship between the sexes in Sarat Chatterji's novels, Humayun Kabir observes, "In the relations between them there is always an element of motherly solicitude. More often than not, Chatterji's heroines love their heroes with almost a motherly love."<sup>17</sup> An uncharitable observer might even remark that Hindu men never quite outgrow their mother's influence, never fully emancipate themselves from her comforting, shelter-

<sup>16</sup> F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 372.

<sup>17</sup> H. Kabir, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

ing care. Highly idealised and abstracted mother-figures (like the goddess Kali) have been made source of strength, a male characteristic even (or also) in Hindu thought. Father-figure is so destructively violent (god Śiva) that it is impossible to face him. To make of such an impossible, wrathful person a tolerable human being, he is converted into a gentle, mild and compassionate man. Aggression is dissociated from the image of the father and all his force, power, and anger are also removed; he is no more a terror, a nightmare but becomes eminently companionable. That this construction is more than the writer's imagination can be proved from the fact that the ideal image of the Hindu is of the gentle, compassionate and loving type. It is not that aggression is subordinated to noble ends in an ideal figure, it is that it has no place at all. It may not be out of place to recall the extraordinary importance Krishna has given to anger as a destructive force in his discourses to Arjun in *Bhagavadgītā*. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, it has had the greatest effect on the elite of Hindu society, on its intelligent and intellectual members. As far as the attitude of the masses to this soft, yielding and unprotesting ideal is concerned, no illustration can serve better than the difference in the veneration that the two brothers in *Rāmāyana*, Rama and Lakshman have received from people.<sup>18</sup> Rama, as the hero of the epic, accepts, without a word of protest, a most unjust decision about his life: fourteen of the best years of his life to be spent in forests. There is an unquestioning submission to evil and foul-play on the part of Rama, causing intense grief and sorrow to all except two evil souls. How does it happen that the hero of a narration cannot tear asunder the tenuous fabric of such a malicious plot against him? The heroism of Rama precisely lies, on the one hand, in the enormous injustice of the demand made on him, and on the other, in his unprotesting, almost willing submission to it. Rama is unhumanly self-sacrificing. Lakshman is a far more human character, although no less great in making personal sacrifices. (Voluntarily he joined Rama

<sup>18</sup> Ananda Coomaraswamy has thus observed on the value of ideals for the Hindus: "The heroes themselves they made ideal types of character for the guidance of all subsequent generations; for the education of India has been accomplished deliberately through hero-worship." *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 27.

on his exile, leaving his young wife behind, out of sheer love for, and loyalty to his brother.) He can be violent, can feel revengeful and can burst out in anger. The highest adoration has, however, always gone to Rama. He is what cannot be easily achieved, he suffers gladly. Lest this be said that Rama is the ideal of self-control, in full possession of his emotions, let it be pointed out that Rama is never angered, he never has the feeling of being unjustly treated. He is incapable of being angry.<sup>19</sup> It is not the control of anger but the complete absence of it that makes him a great hero in Hindu estimation. If control of anger had anything to do with the gaining of heroic quality, Lakshman and not Rama should have been the hero. Is it not curious, from psychological point of view, that even when Krishna is instigating Arjun to fight, he never tries to provoke his aggression against his hateful cousins but only tries to instill in him a sense of duty to fight? Not hate, not revenge, not the bitter memories of the many insults and privations that were heaped on them but a cold sense of duty should inspire Arjun to conquer his enemies! Despite the range of arguments (e.g. social ridicule) that Krishna employs to rouse Arjun to action, not once does he deem to kindle his anger. An examination of the difference in the characters of the five brothers (Pandavas) of *Mahābhārat* would support the foregoing. Of the five, Yudhishtira, Bhima and Arjun are the three brothers of one mother Kunti, of whom Bhima and Arjun symbolise fighting genius, the former of sheer massive strength and the latter of skilled archery. Yudhishtira, as the eldest, is also called the Dharmarāj the master of righteousness. He will say no wrong, much less do any wrong, no matter how high is the stake. Even at a supremely critical moment, the greatest untruth he could bring himself to utter was to pronounce the qualifying phrase of "man or elephant"

<sup>19</sup> A strange confirmation of this view came from a most unexpected source, much after these lines were first written for the purpose of Ph.D. dissertation. Writing under the caption "People must shake off lethargy" in the *Bhoodan*, English weekly organ of Bhoodan movement, Acharya Vinoba Bhave suggests that people must popularise worship of 'Hanuman', the "monkey devotee of Shri Rama, who personifies speed, vitality and elemental energy," instead of worship of Shri Rama, as the latter, according to Vinoba, "is a passive worship, while the former is active." *The Indian Express*, 25th June, 1957. See also *Bhoodan Yagna* (Hindi), No. 40, 5th July, 1957.

at a lower pitch.<sup>20</sup> Even when Draupadi, the polyandrous wife of the five brothers, is (unsuccessfully) attempted to be undressed in an open respectable gathering, Yudhishtira sits quiet, gulping the humiliation down. Although the halo of heroism is divided between the three brothers, Yudhishtira is shown superior to Bhima and Arjun, not only because he is the eldest but much more so by his having gone to heaven with the least difficulty. Here again we find that not to feel angry at all under the most provoking, humiliating situation does a lot to raise one to the status of a hero.

In modern time, the personalities of Gandhi and Nehru will reveal that though both have been popular, their popularity has differed according to their personalities. A man of peace and non-violence, of suffering and humility, a follower of Christ's 'Sermon on the Mount,' Gandhi was revered, even worshipped. Exuberant and excitable, youthful and active, vehement and dashing, Nehru is only loved. The highest adoration has gone to Gandhi, who has completely quelled aggression. He is the Mahatma. However heroic Nehru might be, he is yet human, with the faults and weaknesses of a mortal.

The type of film hero who enjoys mass popularity would be yet another index to people's wishes and fantasies. "The best actors and actresses are the embodiment of the characteristics of their own people. Who are more American than Spencer Tracy or Henry Fonda or Marlon Brando? Who more Italian than Anna Magnani? Who more German than von Stroheim, more French than Jean Gabin, Arletty, or Edwige Feuillere, more Russian than Cherkasov? Who more British than Michael Redgrave, John Mills, or Laurence Olivier?"<sup>21</sup> Not a single

<sup>20</sup> Dronacharya, the guru of the Pandavas, was obliged to join the Kauravas because he was under the latter when the Pandavas were spending the enforced exile of twelve years in forests. The fact of the guru being in the opposite camp had a very unnerving effect on the Pandavas. At a critical moment in the battlefield, they wanted to paralyse Dronacharya emotionally by giving him a shocking news. An elephant of the same name (Ashvasthama) as that of Dronacharya's son was killed. Yudhishtira was chosen to announce it. He announced loudly the fact of Ashvasthama's death but allowed the qualifying phrase of whether it was a man or an elephant to be drowned in the noise of the battle.

<sup>21</sup> Roger Manvell, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

romantic hero of the Indian screen (Hindi) is a tough guy. There is no counterpart of Clark Gable (or, of even Gregory Peck) on the Indian screen. The strong and masterful hero, conquering and subjugating all opposition to his desired goal, is altogether missing here. It is only the villain who is tough and strong. The test of a character is in a crisis. And, what does an Indian hero do when he is faced with the crisis of the loss of his love object? There are three ways of dealing with such a situation: (i) if there is a rival, to remove or destroy him, (ii) to destroy the love-object itself, and (iii) to destroy oneself. The preferred method of the Indian hero is the last. Aggression is not turned on the outside object but on the self.

The inversion of aggression on the self would imply a great amount of underlying guilt. At its very best, the Hindu mind accepts the burden of guilt and directs the aggression inward, thereby displaying an unusual amount of patience and willingness to suffer. At its extreme, the concern for others will include not only other human beings but all living beings, even the invisible insects in the air.<sup>22</sup> Such a total turning in of aggression is just incompatible with survival; one can take no life but one's own. Such a completely self-destructive injunction will very naturally be defied. Between the acceptance and rejection of such an injunction lies the whole gamut of Hindu behaviour, from its most sublime to its most depraved.

It might be protested that the soft aspect of Hindu character has been overdrawn. The writer is aware that the protest can be lodged both by the hostile critic as well as by the admirer of the Hindus. The critic might very well charge that the Hindus appear too noble to be true whereas the admirer might feel that they look too much of weakling to be a fair presentation. In reality, the perspective is not so one-sided. The reasoning of either-or has not been followed throughout and, if a particular component has been chosen for emphasis, it is only against the background of Western civilization. Against this background, it is inevitable that the pacifist and peaceful component of the Hindus should get high-lighted. Where comparison between

<sup>22</sup> Jains and even Buddhists.

the Chinese and the Hindus is attempted, the comparatively martial, masculine element of the latter has been brought out. In the social organisation of the Hindus, the warrior was accorded the second place. The *arvamedh yagna*,<sup>23</sup> essentially an acquisitive ambition with the direct help of force, was the desire of most mighty Kshatriya kings. The Hindus have not been lacking in valour; the Rajputs are renowned for their bravery and daring. While this is indisputably so, the fact remains that the pacifist tradition of the Hindus is also very important and has quite a considerable past. If Kshatriyas were the second in social hierarchy, the Brahmins were the first; if *arvamedh yagna* was the ambition of the rulers at the height of their power, renunciation and *moksha* were the highest, even exclusive ends in the last two stages (*vanaprastha* and *sanyasa*) of their lives.<sup>24</sup> The pacifist temper could be traced as far back as the Indus Valley civilisation which heritage might have acted on the early vigorous Aryans and succeeded in taming them later. On this point Humayun Kabir writes, "According to one hypothesis, the most important influence of this civilisation (Indus Valley) is to be found in the pacific temper of the Indian people. Aryans in other parts of the world have not been especially remarkable for pacifism. In fact, they have generally been noted for their warlike quality and temper. It may therefore be doubted if the prevalent attitude to war and violence is derived from the Aryans. The people of Harappa and Mohenjo daro seem to have developed a pacifist attitude which according to some historians was one main reason for their defeat at the hands of the Aryans."<sup>25</sup> The line of Buddha to Mahavira to Asoka to Gandhi can now be pushed back to one of the earliest civilisations that the world has known. The strands of both pacifism and militarism have flowed in the Hindu vein, but always nominally and not unoften actually,

<sup>23</sup> Mighty rulers in the past who wanted to extend their territory would let loose a horse, followed by a formidable army. Whoever stopped the horse, had also to face the army.

<sup>24</sup> "This recognition of chivalrous usage and limitation of the use of barbarous methods may be associated with that general tendency of Indian thought which puts the priestly caste above the warrior. Purity of life is the first object, and the spiritual law, involving, as it does at its best, careful abstinence from injury to every living creature, man or beast, becomes an ideal of life which in the Brahmanic teaching, ranks above the old knightly ideal." L. T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, p. 253.

<sup>25</sup> *Indian Heritage*, p. 8

the pacifist has enjoyed the upperhand. Discussing the question of war, Hobhouse remarks, "As we go further east we come to that part of the human race in which the inherent preference of peace to war, professed by other peoples, appears to be more of a reality. Both in Hindu and in Chinese ethics, widely different as they are in other respects, war takes a lower place than in Western civilisation."<sup>26</sup>

The other point of importance is the lack of sadistic satisfaction even when aggression is allowed. Perpetration of death and misery as a form of game and as a means of enjoyment has been absent, though hunting was permitted and was enjoyed by the kings.

From this, we now turn our attention to films.

French films dramatise the conflict between paternal and erotic impulses in the aging man, precipitated in relation to a maturing daughter figure. For this reason, he is also shown as obstructing the happiness of a growing son, though his ability to obstruct is mitigated by awareness of his age and declining powers. This has been chosen as the starting point because it occurs to the writer that it is in exact contrast to the picturisation of the relationship between Indian parents and their children.<sup>27</sup> In general it may be said that the relationship of mother and son has received more prominence and central place than that of father and daughter. High-lighting the devotion of son to mother is frequently attempted, even when the picture is not mainly concerned with it. Mother is often depicted as friendly and indulgent to the son, understanding his needs and condoning his faults, not unoften, acting as a buffer between the son and the father. She hardly ever takes on any punishing role. There is almost no sense of rivalry (consciously) with the

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

<sup>27</sup> It must be made clear at the very outset that unconscious and repressed desires have not been taken into account here. This is a regrettable truncation of the treatment but without such limitation, the theme would be very much unmanageable. It would be a great day indeed in the history of national character studies when both conscious and unconscious will be comprehended in a single sweep and treatment. Till then we put up with the truncated thing, only, taking care not to truncate it too much.

father for mother's love ; it is only a question of making oneself more or less worthy of receiving her love. Such a complete split between the tender and the erotic is achieved that sexual rivalry with father for mother's favours is hardly (consciously) felt. As far as tender affection is concerned, son feels himself the natural object of it ; father not even intrudes. This position would be very difficult to understand unless we remember that the attitude of father to his own mother is also the same. What he now expects of his wife does not clash with what his son expects of his mother. Both can have their respective fill of her, without coming into direct conflict as complete rivals.

Similar relationship is established between the father and the daughter. Unlike the French portrayal, there is not a trace of (conscious) eroticism in father's feeling towards mature daughter. Even when marriages between young girls and comparatively old men are shown, the atmosphere is, to a surprising extent, free from sensualism. In *Devdas*, the heroine Parvati is married to an old zamindar and they are shown together in their bedroom. These details would have been enough to lend the atmosphere a markedly erotic touch. But the attitude of the two towards each other gives a very different turn. The old husband does not look at his pretty, young bride with a lustful eye but rather, there is sadness in his far-away look. He thinks of his not too distant end and the long life that is now unfolding before the girl. The attitude of Parvati to her husband is very complicated. She was in love with the son of the zamindar of her village, to whom she could not get married for social reasons. Now married to this old man, she is still in love with Devdas, her disappointed lover. Parvati has accepted her changed lot, her wifely status. Both the facts (her love for Devdas and her acceptance of her marriage) co-exist in her mind without causing any serious conflict or guilt.<sup>28</sup> Desexualised love for both is the only clue to a situation in which conflict inheres, though perhaps there might be yielding to sex as part of her wifely duties in case of one man. Moreover, for both men she has become a sort of

<sup>28</sup> At least, this is not what Sarat Chandra has emphasized, for otherwise Parvati would have tried hard to forget Devdas and wipe him clean out of her life. On the contrary, she wants him to visit her when she can look after him ; she puts it down as the only wish in her life. It is in fulfilment of this that Devdas undertakes the last journey.

mother ; to her husband because of his old age, to her lover because of his vascillation, indecisiveness and unformed character.

In *Devdas* again, the tender love of mother and son also is depicted. Parvati has a step-son, grown-up enough to have himself married Parvati. Despite this parity of age and the absence of any blood relationship, she takes her position as a mother and lavishes her tender solicitations on him. This is, however, not to so say that women in the age-group or status of mother will never evoke sensuality. But such evocation of sensuality will not co-exist with a tender regard for mother. In Sarat Chandra Chatterji's *Bindur Chele* (Bengali), Bindu, the childless pretty wife of the younger brother takes care of her husband's elder brother's son as her own child. There is another boy in the household, whose ways are bad. When some dancing prostitutes visit the village, he compares their beauty with that of Bindu. To have compared the beauty of a woman of his household with the winsome charms of dancing girls definitely implies erotic fantasy on the part of the boy towards Bindu and she is shown to have reacted disapprovingly. But then, he was already a bad boy, he never loved Bindu. This comparison might never have occurred to the younger boy, who loved Bindu as his mother. Tender love and eroticism do not fuse well, may be not at all, at least not at their best.

There are pictures that are devoted more exclusively to the treatment and elaboration of the filial theme. Bimal Roy's *Ma* in Hindi and Atre's *Shyam Chi Aiye* in Marathi are the two best examples. V. Shantaram's *Amar Bhupali* in Marathi also shows the great influence of mother on the young poet. *Ma* has greater variety of characters: the elder son, under the thumb of his wife, is unfilial and is a positively unlikeable character ; the younger son, filial to the core, takes upon himself the blame of a theft, committed by father to procure the tuition fee for his elder son ; father, weak and utterly helpless in the face of financial difficulties ; and above all, the mother, who silently endures all the privations heaped upon her by her elder son but *bears not a trace of ill-will against him*. It is the duty of the mother to be giving and forgiving ; it is for the sons to mind their own duties. Here the two sons point to altogether different paths ; self-centred

and self-seeking, the elder is a despicable character; by his act of uncalculated sacrifice, the younger elevates his character morally. Undoubtedly the survival-value of self-centredness is high, equally undoubtedly the survival-value of total sacrifice is nil. Nevertheless, it is not the survival-value that determines the quality of character, quite the reverse of it. An American, not unsympathetic to Indian point of view, expressed surprise at the fact that a young life should have been allowed to waste, only to save the old father from the charge of crime. One must admit that from the point of view of self, the American was doubtless correct.

*Shyam Chi Aiye* is the autobiographical narration of Sane Guruji, a saintly character who occupied a unique position in the public life of Maharashtra. It is a frank attempt to show how good and excellent, wise and loving his mother was. She died when he was a young boy but her memory remained a living force all throughout his life. He never married. Overwhelmed by the sense of moral degeneration in the political life of the country after Gandhiji's death, he took an overdose of sleeping pills and never woke up again.

In *Amar Bhupali*, the young poet who is already married, is attracted to a dancing and singing girl. It is not his own strong will, or the assertion and protest of his wife but the militant opposition of the mother that prevents his involvement from deepening. It is not the charms of his wife as a woman that succeeds, it is the mother whose force finally prevails. There is no going through the struggle of choosing between two women, it is mere submission to mother's wish. The good and the bad are decided according as it pleases or displeases the mother.

Sarat Chandra Chatterji's story *Mejdi* (Bengali) has slightly different external setting in that elder sister is featured in place of mother. After the death of his poor parents, the small boy goes to live with his rich but heartless elder step-sister. The boy is overworked and ill-treated in his sister's home. The silent suffering of the small boy evokes sympathy and tenderness in his sister's husband's younger brother's wife, who would also be regarded as sister by the boy. Completely unrelated, they yet

come to form such a strong relationship between themselves that the boy silently endures merciless beating for his 'sister's' sake and she is prepared to face all the domestic storm for his sake. Though cast as sisters, they actually occupy mother's place in the boy's life; one, the bad mother who breaks his heart and tortures his body; the other, the good mother who gives him life, protection and security.

Another story of Sarat Chandra Chatterji, *Chota Bhai*, filmed both in Hindi and in Bengali, depicts essentially the filial theme but with different characters. Two step-brothers live together, the elder is considerably older, the younger is a mere boy. The elder brother's wife is like a mother to the boy, who is so naughty and mischievous that there is constant complaint against him. When the elder brother's mother-in-law comes to live with them, the boy finds this cantankerous old woman a very special object of his mischief. Matters come to such a pass that instigated by the constant complaint of his mother-in-law against his younger brother, the elder one decides to separate him and partition the house. It is now that the maternal side of elder brother's wife is fully evoked when she finds the small boy incapable of looking after himself, struggling to lit fire and cook some food for himself. In her great love for the boy, unable to bear any longer his suffering, she defies her husband and brings him back under her care. It is important to note here that in so doing, she had to go against the very active desire of her own mother to keep the boy out of her way.

One significant feature to be noted is the respective roles the two parents play. In both *Ma* and *Shyam Chi Aiyee*, father is shown utterly helpless and resourceless. In Sarat Chandra Chatterji's stories, men are always weak, capable of being manipulated by strong and masterful women. Poverty is the cause of crisis in majority of these pictures (indeed, poverty is the setting of many an Indian picture) and as bread-winners, fathers are considerable failures. Male impotency in the face of external difficulties is a very frequent theme. It is not surprising why poverty features so often—it is the reflection of real situation. But, it is difficult to explain why men are shown as helplessly submitting to external difficulties even in fantasy. Man, as

conquering and subjugating, bending nature and external forces to his will, is very much missing here.<sup>29</sup> And this brings us back to the problem of aggression. Without the release of aggression, how is it possible to conquer and control? Aggression is released self-destructively, masochistically, upon oneself. Only by positing such a blocking of aggression is it possible to explain the passivity, the helplessness and unprotesting surrender of men. The disappointed lover would go to pieces and ruin himself but would not try to remove his rival; the head of the family will turn mendicant and other-worldly but will not struggle to earn a (decent) living.

An aspect of blocking of aggression is the comparative lack of intense hatred. How can one hate without feeling angry? Despite the many brutalities the British committed in suppressing the freedom movement here, there is a surprising lack of hatred towards them. (It is not that people have forgotten.) Some of it is no doubt due to Gandhiji's insistence that we should fight against the British rule in India but not hate the Britishers. But his advice was heeded precisely because intense hatred was lacking as a component of normal life. When he was last in the United States to meet President Eisenhower, Prime Minister Nehru declared that Indians are not good haters. And here is an Englishman who confirms it: "And even after living ten years in Free India, I am still mildly astonished at the lack of hatred wherever I go. It is almost as though there had never been war between my former country and my present one. Indians are not great haters—nor are the British."<sup>30</sup>

In *Devdas*, Devdas deliberately ruins himself by excessive drinking and wanton neglect after he lost his beloved to another

<sup>29</sup> "No impression remains more vivid with me of my visit to India than that of the dominance of nature, and the impotence and insignificance of man. But whatever the cause, there is no doubt about the fact. Indian society became impregnated with the sense of the nothingness of life in time. To escape, not to dominate became the note of their religion. And life being insignificant, history, of course, was so too. It is not an accident, it is a consequence of their attitude to life, that there are no Hindu historians. Contrast the Mahomedans, contrast the Chinese, contrast the western nations. How can you write the history of a nightmare? You don't do that, you try to wake up." G. Lowes Dickinson, *An Essay on the Civilisations of India, China and Japan*, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Gay, *Evening News of India*, 10th August, 1957.

man. In *Mukti*, produced by the late P. C. Barua, a great artist of the Indian screen, the hero leaves his art and home, and goes into a far away jungle on account of a misunderstanding with his wife over his relationship with the model. The hero claimed that the model was only for modelling, the wife suspected something more. A crisis of this nature could have been resolved in many ways: by giving up the model, by giving up his painting or by giving up his wife. Instead of these, the hero takes upon himself the entire burden of solution and ruins both himself and his art. He leaves home and when accidentally he meets his wife much later in a forest, he dies saving her from the hands of a villain. It has been a total destruction of the hero. In *Biraj Bahu*, as the poverty in the house becomes increasingly crushing, the master of the house turns more and more religious, giving his day and night to *bhajan* and *kirtan*, as if he had no care in this world.

It is important to note that the ardour and devotion of wife is not less because of the weak and inefficient character of the husband. There is no (conscious) contempt felt by the wife towards her husband; very often, her last wish is to receive his blessing or at least die in his presence. In *Biraj Bahu*, when Biraj returns home after her voluntary exile, she is already in the grips of death. She is shown dying in the lap of her husband whose unjustified momentary suspicion broke her heart and made her leave home. But now, with her husband beside her, peace has returned to her and she can die without asking for anything more. In *Devdas*, the one wish of Parvati was to keep Devdas in her house and nurse him tenderly like a loving mother. The last scene is heart-rending not only because Devdas dies (the audience was long prepared for this eventuality) but because Parvati could not even see him before his death, even though he dies in the same village. (Sensing his end near, Devdas comes to see Parvati to keep his word of giving her a chance to look after him.) From this it would seem that there is less insistent demand of protective function from the husband, the wife herself has the comparative preparedness to act out this role towards her husband. This is more like a mother-son relationship than like husband-wife.

Lest it be said that only one side has been excessively drawn here, it is appropriate to mention that nagging wives are not altogether absent. But they are neither good women nor good wives. From the start, negative feeling is aroused by such characters and no sympathy is felt even though they might be genuinely suffering. A good woman must not complain, nay, not even harbour any ill-feeling although she might have actually suffered. Her going through the suffering without seeking to hold anyone responsible for it imparts superiority and attractiveness to her character. In psychiatric terms, the reaction is more depressive than persecutory and the difference between the two reactions is best illustrated by Money-Kyrle's example that while a persecutory character will demand apology when he has tread upon someone's toe, the depressive character will offer apology when someone else has tread upon his.

This picturisation of comparative helplessness and willingness to suffer would seem to be supported by real-life events. But, this raises the very difficult question of relationship between fantasy and real life. Discussing this problem, Martha Wolfenstein writes, "In other words, the possible relations between character and preferred fantasies are numerous. We cannot simply infer one from the other. It is necessary to have independent evidence on both topics."<sup>21</sup> This would mean that there is no agreed theoretical framework on which a student can rely; each worker in the field is thrown back on his own resources and insight to interpret the material as best as he can. It would seem to the present writer that fantasy is more a repetition of reality than either projection or denial. Fantasy here is not a world of unrestrained freedom where anything can happen, where there is no poverty, no frustration, no obstacle to one's wish-fulfilment. If compensation were to be the rule of fantasy-creation, there would be inverse relationship between reality and fantasy. What is missing in real life or is hard to obtain would be plentifully supplied in the fantasy-world. But one does not

<sup>21</sup> M. Wolfenstein, "Movie Analysis in the Study of Culture" in M. Mead and R. Métraux (Eds.), *The Study of Culture at a Distance*, p. 277.

find this principle in operation. Death, disease, poverty,<sup>32</sup> old-age, disappointment, bereavement, loneliness—all these and many others feature in fantasy-creations. It may perhaps be that the more inferior the work of fantasy, the more excessively it employs the infantile device of compensation.

In support of the depressive orientation, the writer would like to mention the historical event of Bengal famine. Hunger, in its desperation, has an explosive power that would astound one in sober mood. The organism gears up all its strength for its last chance of survival and attacks with a ferocity that goes much beyond any normal expectation. There was none of these attempts at survival in the famine. Even hunger had lost its moving force and instead of making lions out of lambs, it made the lambs more lamb-like.

It is invariably the father who actively opposes the love-union of both son and daughter. In *Devdas*, it is the zamindar-father who is against his son's marriage with the heroine and again, it is the heroine's father who is so offended at the zamindar's refusal that within a week's time he settles his daughter's marriage with another zamindar. In this case, the mothers of both the hero and the heroine would have been happy if their children were united in marriage. In *Vasihatnama*, a story of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, a literary giant of Bengal, it is the father who is opposed to his daughter getting married to the hero. In *Parineeta*, a story of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee whose place has already been indicated, the father would certainly have opposed his son's marriage with the poor neighbour's niece with whom the hero was in love. It was the father's unsympathetic behaviour that compelled the neighbour who was his debtor, to leave the place and accept the help of a young stranger who now desires to marry the heroine. When at last the hero and the heroine do get married, it is only after the father is dead. In *Aag*, the father

<sup>32</sup> Such technical flaws in production as when a poor family is shown dressed too well or a house is furnished too richly for the means of the owner is beside the point. Despite these technical mistakes which occur frequently, the moving force behind the story remains the poverty of the characters. It may be that these incongruities serve to relieve the extreme depressive effect of poverty and if so, the compensatory principle is secondarily brought into operation.

is against his son's absorption with histrionics to which the son feels wedded. (Here art would seem to take the place of a woman.) In *Shaheed*, the mother is not only sympathetic but even proud of her son's patriotic ambitions, of his love for his motherland. The father, a judge under the British rule is initially strongly opposed to any such tendency, though he is transformed towards the end when his politically rebellious son is put on the gallows.

As against this role of father, not a single picture occurs to the writer where mother has played a similar obstructionist role.<sup>23</sup> When both parents are shown, the mother is generally indulgent towards her children but she ultimately yields to the negative desire of her husband. In all the pictures mentioned earlier, mothers have played this sympathetic but ineffective role. When father is shown alone, he is generally not an obstruction. In Rabindranath Tagore's story *Milan*, the old father is all-indulgence to his young daughter and it seems inconceivable that he would oppose any desire of hers. The same indulgence is shown by fathers in pictures like *Shree 420*, *Andaz*, *Jawab*, *Hamrahi*. In all these pictures, indulgence is shown towards daughter, a rather surprising fact in that a girl's mistake is liable to cause her more harm than a boy's. When father is shown alone, he is generally pretty old and the daughter combines in herself the emotional functions of wife and mother towards the old man. His sense of opposition to a person who is actually more of a guardian to him than a ward, would naturally be feeble. Besides, the very consciousness of old age and approaching end makes the father anxious in a helpless manner to see his daughter married. If any initiative in this direction is forthcoming from her within decent bounds, it is only much to his relief. The fact of father being alone may become a source of conflict to the daughter who will have to leave him after marriage, a type of conflict that Dickens has portrayed so well in *Miss Mannette* in *Tale of Two Cities*.

There are exceptions where fathers have been very severe. In *Awara*, the father-substitute is painfully strict with the heroine. The severity of father towards his daughter borders on cruelty

<sup>23</sup> This impression has been checked by asking a few friends.

in some pictures where physical destruction of the daughters have been attempted like cutting the connecting rope when the daughter is swimming across the river to meet her lover in *Barsaat* and putting the house on fire in *Tarana*. In some other pictures, there is initial severity but ultimate softening of the father like the old zamindar in *Doctor*, who cut his only son out completely when he married a girl of whom the father disapproved. In the last scene, after the marriage of the hero's only son in whose delivery his wife died soon after his disapproved wedding, he is shown singing a song ("Our garden is blooming") at the memorial place of his dead wife and the old father joins him there as also the young couple. Where the initially disapproved woman lay resting, three generations now stood united.

Social reasons very often serve as obstacle to the union of two lovers. There may be difference in caste and therefore difference in the social status of the two lovers. At times the caste may be the same but difference in the prestige of the two families and/or their wealth may be the cause for objection.

In so far as these factors are represented as obstacles, it is correct reflection of the actual social condition. It is important to note that all these objections are of an external nature, they do not inhere in the personalities concerned. The badness and unworthiness of the boy or the girl has little part to play in their rejection. Not unoften, the objecting parents actually like the boy or the girl and in a way, themselves suffer genuinely in preventing the marriage. It seems surprising that external factors should be allowed to wreck the happiness of people and nothing should be done to remove or at least to reduce this obstructing factor. From where does the rigidity of the caste come and how is it maintained? A thoroughgoing sociologist may feel satisfied with the observation that caste system is an age-old institution and has a sanctity all its own. This answer may well be true but the system cannot have a continued rigidity unless it answers to some inner need. It seems likely that some inner inflexibility is expressed in the institutional rigidity. A free, unhampered flow of emotions is feared as dangerous, volcanically eruptive, and caste system serves as the dam that keeps the turbulent waters in their proper places. Rabindranath

Tagore writes, "Therefore in her caste regulations India recognised differences, but not the mutability of life. In trying to avoid collisions she set up boundaries of immovable walls, thus giving to her numerous races the negative benefit of peace and order but not the positive opportunity of expansion and movement. . . . Therefore life departed from her social system and in its place she is worshipping with all ceremony the magnificent cage of countless compartments that she has manufactured."<sup>24</sup> The caste system acts as a sort of safety-valve in the reverse manner.

The triangle of love is projected outside, on the external plane. When there are rivals in the situation, he is very often a villain. He is bad throughout and the dislike of the audience is evoked right from the beginning. The villain or the unworthy competitor is in the same age group as the hero. Older men are seldom cast in such roles. Even when heroine is married to an older man, it is not his mature personality that wins. He may not succeed in evoking the warmth and passion of her love; his marriage might have been a matter of social convenience. The older man, in terms of better and fuller personality, is not a serious threat to the not-yet-fully-formed young man. From this it would appear that sibling rivalry is much more charged with feeling than rivalry with father.

There are examples of internalized conflict too. Heroines are more given to this variety of conflict than heroes. In *Jogan*, the young heroine lives in a dream-world of fantastic imagination while the family is overburdened with debt. Engaged to a man old enough to be her father, she leaves home and turns an ascetic. It is then that she meets a young man and feels drawn towards him. Lashed by her now too severe conscience, she leaves that village and undertakes such difficult penance that she finally meets with her end. The emerging instinct was brutally quelled by the overgrown conscience.

In *Udayar Pathe*, a Bengali picture of social theme, the heroine daughter lives in the world of her old, capitalist father

<sup>24</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, p. 110.

and young, degenerate brother. A stern idealist enters the situation and disturbs the quiet equanimity of the bourgeois girl. Of ordinary looks and very unromantic manners, it is the burning idealism of the hero that gradually exercises its attraction on her. His dedication to the cause of workers brings the awakening sympathy of the girl in sharp conflict with her devotion to the aging, capitalist father. She finally decides to leave her exploiting father and join her idealistic man. Superficially it is the triumph of love but it is a love to which duty gives flesh and blood. Her man is not a romantic lover, far from it. What helps the girl to decide in his favour is his superiority in moral terms, his amorous appeal is nil. It is not the victory of instinct over conscience but the triumph of one duty (superior) over another (inferior). If passionate love were to be responsible for the girl's decision, her character would have suffered in evaluation.

According to Wolfenstein, "The dual aspect of the father, as paternal and erotic, the day-time and the night-time father, is a recurrent theme in French films."<sup>25</sup> It would seem that Indian pictures do not portray the night-time role of the father; it is not his erotic side but the paternal that receives importance. To the best of the writer's knowledge, there is hardly any Indian picture of note that has as its theme the conflict between the paternal and erotic in the aging father, either as attraction towards a grown-up daughter or as hostility towards a young son. The tender attachment between father and daughter may cause wrench to both on separation after marriage. But the erotic component in such an attachment is severely ruled out, unless, of course, one maintains that there is no difference between the tender and the erotic. From the point of view of object-love, the tender and the erotic attachments will express themselves very differently. The erotic attachment will inevitably imply a sense of exclusive possession of the object, with jealousy and hatred ready to erupt the moment a rival's presence is felt. The tender attachment admits of the possibility of sharing the object and to that extent, the disruptive element of hate is kept out of the situation. Therefore, even if the roots of the two be ultimately traced to the same

<sup>25</sup> M. Wolfenstein in R. Métraux and M. Mead (Eds.), *Themes in French Culture*, p. 90.

source, for all practical purposes, it is vital to make a distinction between the tender and the erotic.

What happens to the erotic side of father? It seems that the processes of both splitting and repression finally succeed in dissociating the image of father from a strong, overpowering sexuality. In actual life, father's sexuality is to a considerable extent repressed. An anxiety, amounting almost to sinfulness, is felt by both the parents when the daughter has attained puberty and the father has not succeeded in getting her suitably married. So pressing is this thought on the parents' minds that their lives become a series of unrelieved anxiety and restlessness. The paradox is that the more they love their daughter, their anxiety to get her married would be correspondingly greater. Sensitive girls have a very hard and painful time during this period, holding themselves the cause of their parents' anxiety and misery and unhappy at the thought of not being wanted any more in their old homes. (Note the feeling of guilt that is experienced on both the sides.)

Whence this anxiety to get the daughter married? One explanation is in very objective terms: the danger of shame that a daughter can bring about by her mistake. But this obviously does not explain the intensity of feeling on the issue. Segregation and reasonable carefulness could substantially remove the danger. Nor could the idea that the grown-up daughter is being denied sexual gratification be the real explanation. Such an idea would imply too realistic and vivid a thinking of the daughter's sexual needs on the part of parents. Could it be that the repressed erotic side of father is causing the anxiety and even guilt? The danger is felt from within and to remove the object under an arrangement that suits her best, viz., marriage, would certainly be an excellent solution. As for mother's anxiety, her unconscious sense of rivalry with the young daughter may now express itself as a grave concern for the welfare of her daughter.

Wolfenstein suggests "a characteristic way of handling the dangerous sexual aspect of the father for French children: projecting it outside the house on to mythological creatures . . . who may descend on children who do not close their eyes and

go to sleep at night."<sup>36</sup> The fear associated with nocturnal visits of dangerous and monstrous creatures are invoked in India also to tame recalcitrant children into submission. But this bogey derives from the aggressive side of father rather than from the erotic side. Popular belief in India divides these bogey-figures into two categories: the violent, sadistic monsters who are just out to kill one and the highly seductive beings, both male and female, who bring one to ruin and even death by over-indulgence in sex. This is a superstition shared by many adults too. Lonely paths, far-away riversides<sup>37</sup> and huge tree-tops in villages are generally believed to be the favourite resorts of these evil and malicious spirits. Only with a thud in one's heart would one cross these spots in darkness, particularly after midnight. A split between the ruinously seductive and destructively violent operates.

The great difference between the French films and the Indian would be that while "the rivalry of fathers and sons is thus amply acknowledged in French films, but it is mitigated in various ways,"<sup>38</sup> the Indian pictures show no awareness of this problem at all. The major effort that is made in French films to transform the father into a sympathetic and even pitiable figure is something that is already an accomplished fact in Indian setting. Although the father in Indian films retains not a little of the obstructive aspect, there is no consciously felt personal motive for it. His objections proceed mainly from social reality.

While it has been said that not a single Indian picture occurs to the writer<sup>39</sup> which has as its theme the conflict between a young (son-figure) and an old man (father-figure) over a love-object, there are pictures (though very few) that treat the problem of two brothers loving the same girl and coming to conflict over it, and two friends in love with the same girl, one actively, the other passively and the latter marrying the girl at the suggestion,

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>37</sup> Riverside is generally the place where corpses are burnt. With the faith in an undying soul, a very active belief prevails that such places are infested with evil spirits. Generally, such places are the seats for perfecting black magic.

<sup>38</sup> M. Wolfenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

<sup>39</sup> This impression again has been checked by asking a few friends. None of them could think of any film, treating such a theme.

even active persuasion of the former. Such a move may be initiated by the requited lover on realisation of the undesirability of his marriage with the heroine like the knowledge of a deadly disease. *Bujdil* in Hindi deals with the love of two brothers for the same girl who has grown up in their house. The girl herself is in love with the younger brother but she knows that the elder brother is also in love with her. Till the last, the younger brother knows nothing about his elder brother's attitude towards the girl. In a dream, the elder brother stabs his rival younger brother and is so smitten with remorse on waking up that he gives the younger brother a generous amount of money as the latter approaches him with a request for little money. The story ends in the elder brother's death and the younger not knowing anything about his secret love. In *Sainya* again, Hindi adaptation of *Duel in the Sun* (starring Gregory Peck, Joseph Cotton and Jennifer Jones), both the brothers are in love with the same girl who has come to stay in their house but the girl is not so decided in her own mind. She vacillates between the two brothers and succeeds in deepening the involvement of both. A very nearly irreconcilable situation is built-up and the story ends in the tragic death of all the three. In *Nishan*, Hindi adaptation of *Corsican Brothers*, twin brothers have identical feelings and therefore inevitably love the same girl. The girl is, of course, decidedly in love with only one brother and it is when the unloved brother is killed by the loved one that the story comes to an end. It may not be without significance to observe that both *Sainya* and *Nishan*, adaptations of Western pictures, have too much of violence in them.

Of the variety of pictures where the lover himself requests, even implores his friend to marry his beloved, *Aah* would be a good example. After falling headlong in love with the girl, the hero is found suffering from tuberculosis and subsequently learns that he cannot survive. With seeming heartlessness, he simulates love for the heroine's elder sister and tries to throw the heroine on the rebound to cause her to forget him as her one-time lover. Meanwhile, he extracts promise of marriage from his dear friend. The marriage procession of the heroine (with the friend) synchronises with the death scene of the hero. In *Mahal*, the story ends in a similar way. In *Parineeta* and *Vasiyatrnama* too,

there is giving up of the love-object in favour of another man and a sense of unity (rather than hatred and hostility) is vaguely roused between the two men. In *Parineeta*, a young man of means helps a family in distress. He even desires to marry a girl from the family but the eldest girl whom he wants to marry is already in love with the zamindar's son whose neighbour and debtor they were. When the young benefactor proposes to her, she makes plain to him that her heart already belongs to somebody else and that she cannot marry anyone else. Objectively, this young man was clearly in a position to compel her to marry him but he decides to marry another daughter of the family. The lovers are at last married and the two men feel friendly when they had initially felt jealous and hostile. The story of *Vasiyatinama* is more complicated in its general setting but here too, the hero gives up the girl he wants to marry in favour of another man. Here again, the hero was in a position to compel the girl to marry him but the idea that the girl herself might be wanting to marry the other man forces the contrary decision on him. As in the previous picture, the hero is a benefactor to the girl here. In *Aag*, the earliest picture of the young producer Raj Kapoor, the heroine is in love with one of the two heroes. The unloved hero was also secretly in love with the heroine. In a fire that takes place on the sets of the theatre, the loved hero emerges disfigured, to the utter horror of the heroine. She then transfers her love to the other hero, though not without the resentment of the former lover. But neither of the two lovers, at different moments of their defeats, did anything either to win her love or to eliminate the rival or at least to outshine him. In *Nadan*, there is similar situation of two men being in love with the same woman, one whose love is responded to by the heroine, the other of whose love she is aware and towards whom she feels respectfully grateful but no love. The unloved hero goes to the extent of defending the girl by saying that it is not she who loves him but he who loves her; the duties of love should, therefore, devolve on him and not on her. He even risks his life to help the loved hero and the heroine to escape from a dangerous situation. *Babul* has the theme of surrender of love-object on the part of all the three main characters. Here, the reverse situation obtains in that two women are in love with one man. The hero himself is attached to the daughter of the zamindar who reciprocates.

The daughter of the village family, with whom the hero stays, is also in love with him. The hero fails to divine her love for him, absorbed as he was in his own love for the zamindar's daughter. The zamindar turns out to be a friend of hero's father and for some family reason, the lovers cannot be married. The zamindar's daughter's marriage is arranged with someone else and the hero, hiding his tortures within him, plays a socially important part in the wedding as the son of an old friend should play. Having lost or given up his love object, he notices the love of the other girl. He makes up his mind to marry her but an accident results in the death of the girl. All the three characters are separated from their love-objects: the hero gives up the heroine by wilful choice, so does the heroine more or less, and the village girl loses the hero by not declaring her love early enough and by suffering silently when the hero was involved with the other girl. In *Darogaji*, a young village girl promptly falls in love with a police officer. She gets to know him and is employed in his household. Her keen interest in the upkeep of the house fails to betray her love to the officer, who is otherwise very nice and gentle to her. Soon after, he goes home, gets married and brings his wife along. It is no doubt a great blow to the village girl but she keeps coming to the house and now lavishes the same fond care on the wife (note the absence of jealousy) that she had once done on the officer. But life is slowly taking leave of her frame and the once vivacious, sprightly girl is soon reduced to a pale bundle of thin bones. When at last she agrees to get married to any one in deference to the wishes of the officer, she collapses in her very wedding and breathes her last. Men or women, Sydney Cartons abound in Indian films.

Essentially dealing with the same theme of two men in love with one girl, *Andaz* is a more complicated picture. The heroine's life is saved by an unknown young man with whom she gets quite friendly. The young man mistakes her friendliness for love and of course, he is head over heels in love with her. The truth is that the heroine is already engaged to another man who is abroad, and whenever she makes allusions to her love for her fiancée, he mistakes them as hints to her love for him. When the real hero returns, this young man painfully notices the change in the heroine; it is not that she has withdrawn her friendliness from

him but that she is much friendlier with the real hero. Finally, it comes up for clarification between the heroine and the young man; it is a very difficult situation in that the young man was led on by very plausible indications though the heroine had alluded to her real love time and again. Confronted with their approaching marriage and with his own undiminished love for her, the Sydney Carton in him comes up and the disappointed lover decides to leave the place on the day of the wedding. The heroine persuades him to stay on for fear that his hasty, unexplained departure might give rise to indecent gossips. The Sydney Carton in him compels him to yield to her persuasion. With the knowledge of this love, the heroine is unable to have a happy, relaxed time in the same city. She goes to another place with her husband where she has comparatively quieter time and becomes a mother. She is most reluctant to return to the city and the husband begins to wonder why she is so sensitive to the idea of returning to the city where actually normal life in the sense of work and family can be had. At last they do come back to the city and the suspicion of the husband gathers momentum from now on. Certain of the fact that his wife loves this man, the hero hits him on his head with a tennis racket in a fit of sudden anger. It is interesting to contrast it with a dream of the heroine where the rivals are aiming guns at each other. Instead of guns in real life being replaced by rackets in dreams, the symbol is just the other way about. Unconsciously more violence is felt than is actually committed in real life. Ultimately, the heroine shoots her disappointed lover but that is when, in part delirious and part excited state, he tries to grab her physically and register his claim over her body. The violence recoils on the heroine who is sentenced to long imprisonment on the charge of murder. Not only violence does not pay, one has to pay too heavily for it oneself.

Rabindranath Tagore's *Milan* has a rather intricate plot. A young man in Calcutta is in love with a girl when he is suddenly taken home by his father and is married to another girl there. On the return journey after marriage, there is a storm on the river and the boat capsizes. Next morning, the hero Ramesh finds himself lying on the sand of the river bank, with a girl similarly lying there. Ramesh takes her to be his wife but soon

after discovers the mistake: this girl has a name different from his wife's<sup>49</sup> nor does she come from the same village. The difficult conclusion is inescapable that she is someone else's bride, caught in a similar mishap and separated from her husband as Ramesh was separated from his wife. But he cannot abandon the girl nor can he tell the truth, much less can he live with her. He brings Kamala to Calcutta from his village home and puts her in a hostel. Ramesh now meets his sweetheart Hem, whom he still hopes to marry, though he has not a ghost of an idea how. We see a passiveness in Ramesh, a drifting with events which is very unmanly.

As the story proceeds, Kamala gets to know the truth and leaves Ramesh with the intention of committing suicide. She, however, does not and by a happy chance, lands in a city where her real husband lives. (Kamala got to know all the details about her husband and about the love between Hem and Ramesh from a letter that the latter tried to write to Hem to clarify his position to her but which inadvertently, he forgot to post or hide away.) Kamala succeeds in getting employed in her husband's house to look after his ailing mother. Meanwhile, a marriage proposal between her husband and Hem is ripening. Even when the marriage negotiation is about to be finalised, Kamala does not bring herself to reveal her real identity. She was prepared to face her ruin right under her nose which could have been easily avoided by a slight move of hers. There is no effort made for rights that one knows and believes to be one's own. The characters of both Ramesh and Kamala shed light on Hindu character—Ramesh, by his passivity and submission to events, and Kamala, by her preparedness to forgo all chances of her happiness.

According to Wolfenstein, there is no comparable mitigation of hostilities between mother and daughter-figures in French film. Indian pictures do not acknowledge even an implied existence of hostility between mothers and daughters. But the relationship of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law contains not a few seeds

<sup>49</sup> In traditional Hindu marriages, the bride and the bridegroom do not see each other till after marriage when they are ceremonially brought together for the consummation of marriage.

of conflict. The conflict centres round the husband: to whom does he belong? Mothers do not easily renounce, at least not without keen regret, their hold over their sons. It would be natural for the wife to want to have the central place in her husband's life, at least till she has her own children. In this, the mother very often proves, if not a successful rival, at least a very formidable obstacle. Along with it is the fact that the husband himself is inclined to enthrone mother in his heart, even if it amounts to neglecting his wife. This inclination of the husband would be there in the measure in which his conscience is strong and effective. If his tendency is libidinous, given to valuing more his wife than his mother, he is already a degenerate character, like the elder brother in the picture *Ma*. To neglect mother in favour of one's wife is more than enough for his being dubbed henpecked. It is interesting to note that a man saves himself from the unmanly charge of being henpecked, not by being really manly but by preferring to submit to mother and not to wife. With the death of mother, wife takes the now vacant central place in her husband's life. This triangle of mother-son-wife is not presented and dealt with as a pure psychological phenomenon: it often takes the form of conflict over running the household, controlling the purse, having larger and decisive say in important matters. The dowry system introduces non-psychological, material factors even in the origin of this conflict. Young wives have to tolerate taunts and insults for their fathers not giving as much as was promised or the bridegroom was led to expect. Shantaram's *Dehej* is exclusively devoted to this theme but in minor and round-about ways, this theme is to be found in many other Indian pictures. Despite these external trappings, the core of the problem relates to the rivalry of the two women, wife and mother, to possess the man who is husband to one and son to another.

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## CHAPTER VI

"The genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs."

—FRANCIS BACON,

*Essays.*

"The proverbs of a nation are the great book out of which it is easy to read its character."

—PAXTON HOOD,

In *Champion*, *Racial Proverbs*, p. 4.

"Proverbs, like the sacred books of each nation, are the sanctuary of the institutions."

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON,

"Compensation" in

*Basic Selections from Emerson*, p. 80.

"In all pointed sentences, some degree of accuracy must be sacrificed to conciseness."

—SAMUEL JOHNSON,

*Works*, Vol. X, p. 286.

## STUDY IN PROVERBS

Proverbs on the significance of proverbs:

A proverb characterises nations but must first dwell amongst them. (Swiss-German, p. 321.)<sup>1</sup>

In proverbs the conscience of the people sits in judgement. (Swiss-German, p. 321.)<sup>1</sup>

Nothing tells us more of the spirit of a people than its proverbs. (English, p. 4.)<sup>1</sup>

As the country, so the morals; as the morals, so the proverbs. (German p. 178.)<sup>1</sup>

As the people, so the proverb. (Scottish, p. 5.)<sup>1</sup>

The proverbs quoted so far would serve to indicate the significance they have for the type of study attempted here. Not depending on the written word, either for their origin or for their popularity, proverbs have an antiquity that may well be the envy of other forms of (folk) literature. Tracing the use of proverbs to the earliest civilisations of Egypt and Babylonia, one writer goes on to say that " . . . it would not be wrong to assume that the proverbs themselves have succeeded in moulding the varying characters of different nations."<sup>2</sup> (Compare this with Barker's

Champion, *Racial Proverbs*.

A different system of reference has been adopted in this chapter only for proverbs. Author's name is quoted in italics, in bracket, along with the proverb. When the proverbs are serially numbered, their numbers have been mentioned, otherwise only pages are indicated.

<sup>1</sup> Rao Sahab Dr. P. V. Chavan, *The Konkani Proverbs*, p. 1.

estimate of literature earlier in this work.) And, as early as 1869, in his lectures on proverbs, Trench argued that his inability to demonstrate national character from proverbs should be interpreted as his personal failure (due to his lack of skill or lack of time), and not as a disproof of that point of view.<sup>3</sup> Though proverbs are generally taken as index to the character of peoples, it is not an easy task to weave out a coherent picture of a nation's mind (used only for semantic brevity) from the literal meanings of the proverbs. A good number of proverbs have such a general and universal distribution that critics have pointed out the hopelessness of any attempt to see a group character. On reflection, the situation does not appear so discouraging. Since many life-situations are the same the world over, identical proverbs are only to be expected. Westermarck has answered that national characteristics are revealed not only in the different proverbs but in the shades of the same proverb. Ginsberg has recommended study of proverbs as one of the fruitful approaches to the vast subject of national character.<sup>4</sup> Westermarck has brought out the point that sheer study of proverbs is not likely to yield any valuable clue unless the research worker already has some independent knowledge of the culture. He writes, "... in order to gain reliable information about a people from its proverbs it is necessary to possess intimate knowledge of it derived from other sources, foremost of which is personal experience."<sup>5</sup> Since the present writer is born and brought up as a Hindu, this difficulty happily does not arise. Even so, it is well to bear in mind Westermarck's caution that proverbs do not lay bare completely the mental life of a society but only allow partial glimpses of it: "Proverbs can only throw rays of light, never full light upon national character."<sup>6</sup>

On the prevalence and influence of proverbs in different lands, Chavan states: "Among Orientals, proverbs form the foundations of moral and political philosophy. They have a special influence in impressing upon the minds of the masses

<sup>3</sup> Richard Chenevix Trench, *Proverbs, And Their Lessons*, pp. 54-84.

<sup>4</sup> M. Ginsberg, National Character, *British Journal of Psychology*, 32, 1941-42, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> E. Westermarck, *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, p. 52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

fundamental principles of morality and noble living."<sup>7</sup> R. C. Temple, in his preface to Dr. S. W. Fallon's *A Dictionary of Hindustani Proverbs*, has similar things to say about India. He compares India with Spain as the land of proverbial sayings where proverbs are used by all, particularly by women, and on a variety of occasions. He sums up thus: "Taken all in all, therefore, there is no study—as a study—that I know of, that will render the student of the natives of India so deeply conversant with their thoughts and mode of life as that of their proverbial and aphoristic lore."<sup>8</sup> Jensen, however, goes the farthest in declaring that "The proverbs and maxims are India's practical ethics. The Indian proverbs are not antiquarian curiosities, but living and stern realities, and hence perhaps more celestial than the so-called "Celestial Songs" of the Bhagavadgita."<sup>9</sup>

Extensive interpretations have been attempted to indicate how far the proverbs do or do not dovetail with the content derived from other sources. As will be seen later, there is no uniformity in this matter. Since the writer's total ignorance of any South Indian language prevented him from utilising the themes of South Indian films, it was considered proper to give prominence to South Indian proverbs; the imbalance stands corrected thereby. To avoid bulkiness, many proverbs that could be duplicated from different Indian languages have been left out.

### *Fate*

The stereotype of the Hindus as fatalistic is supported by these proverbs:

One may bathe so as to wash off oil, but who can rub himself so as to free himself from fate. [JENSEN, 50.]

Though dirt may be got rid of, inherited fate will not expire. [JENSEN, 50.]

Though one weeps, will the fate written (by Brahma) be removed? [JENSEN, 52.]

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *P.* II.

<sup>9</sup> H. Jensen, *A Classified Collection of Tamil Proverbs*, p. xv.

Compare this with Omar Khayyám's

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all the Piety nor Wit

Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line  
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it. [E.  
FITZGERALD, L1.]

Since the letters of fate are on your head, will your fate  
leave you because you shave your head ? [JENSEN, 55.]

However much a man exerts himself, he will not get a  
silver coin as long as fate is against him. [JENSEN, 60.]

When God has made a mark, there is no erasing of it.  
[JENSEN, 61.]

There is medicine for diseases but is there any medicine  
for fate ? [JENSEN, 64.]

It is impossible to darn the rent made by fate, even if  
you darn with the needle of wisdom. [CHAMPION,  
Indian, p. 412.]

What will be—will be. [CHAMPION, Indian, p. 415.]

Discussing the theory of Karma (action and reaction), Joad has pointed out how the difficulty of finding a logical solution of the problem of determinism has increasingly led to a fatalistic interpretation of the doctrine: "This fatalistic interpretation of the doctrine has, most observers are agreed, played a considerable part in producing the mental and moral inertia which the Western mind is apt rightly or wrongly to discern in the Hindu."<sup>10</sup> Hindus are often found on the defensive whenever faced with such a charge. In the writer's opinion, the very eagerness to defend gives them away by showing their sensitive spot.

But no society can go on if its members believe in a thorough-going fatalism. It is just not compatible with the requirements of living. The process of living demands some effort, may be small, on the part of those who wish to continue their existence. Wholesale emphasis on fatalism will sap all energy and leave no

<sup>10</sup> C. E. M. Joad, *Indian Civilisation*, p. 55.

desire for any activity since everything would be predetermined. Following proverbs, therefore, show the importance of effort:

With continued attempts, even a fool may win. [CARR, 2030.]

Endeavour makes the man. [CARR, Sanskrit, 83.]

Fortune favours the persevering and stout hearted. [CARR, Sanskrit, 84.]

The animal that moves about will find pasture. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 421.]

Fate is lame without effort. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 421.]

At the end of effort is God. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 422.]

First endeavour, then God. [CHAMPION, Marathi p. 422.]

### *Procrastination*

Sloth turns motor into poison. [JENSEN, 1304.]

Like looking out for an auspicious day to dig well to quench a burning house. [JENSEN, 1308.]

They who delay ploughing will have to cry for food. [JENSEN, 1332.]

### *Anger*

The destructiveness of anger, so repeatedly emphasized by Krishna in the *Gītā* is borne out here:

When a gentle person gets angry, a forest will not hold his wrath. [JENSEN, 1942.]

In a good man, wrath (lasts) for a moment; in a middling man, for two hours; in a base man, for a day and night; in a great sinner, until death. [CARR, Sanskrit, 77.]

Anger has no eyes. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 398.]

Anger injures itself; wisdom injures another. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 398.]

There is always in misery more of anger (than anything else). [CHAMPION, Malayalam, p. 420.]

Anger ends in cruelty. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 429.]

Anger is sin; sleep is an enemy. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 429.]

These proverbs show the uncontrollable aspect and the extensive destruction of anger. Anger has no place in a good man, except for a moment, and is to be expected most in a bad man, in a sinner. Anger has no good to serve. It supports the picture of the ideal, discussed in the beginning of the preceding chapter that Hindu heroes are not those who master their anger but those who do not possess it at all. Anger is not only not useful but is positively harmful. It is almost synonymous with badness. It is only the villain who is permitted anger, not the hero.

It is superfluous to emphasize the importance of a hero in the life of a society. It is for this reason that every society, in course of time, creates heroes for the guidance of its own members. Even the socialist society of Soviet Russia, ideologically committed to equality and no-hero idea, had not only to raise, first Lenin (and now Stalin ?) to the status of heroes but had actually to deify them. Heroes have played a very important part in Hindu society and is well attested by Ananda Coomaraswamy: "The heroes themselves they made ideal types of character for the guidance of all subsequent generations; for the education of India has been accomplished deliberately through hero-worship."<sup>11</sup> These non-aggressive heroes have been so successful in fulfilling their tasks that even righteous indignation has not been allowed. Kalidas has written (*Raghuvamsham*, Canto XIV, 59-68) that the first reaction of Sita was anger when she learnt from Lakshman the reason of her banishment. Later she cooled down and prayed that she should continue to be Rama's wife even in her next birth. Atreya proudly records: "It is remarkable that Indian thought includes no concept of

<sup>11</sup> A. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 27.

'rights'."<sup>12</sup> When the self is overburdened with a concept of extensive debt, of what use can aggression be to such a man who has to spend his life paying off these debts? In making sacrifices, aggression is not needed except in its turning upon the self.

This has unfortunately led to the firm establishment of the stereotype that Hindus are all passive and all peaceful. These observers deny to the Hindus an amount of aggression which they themselves would not do. Although written from the point of view of climatic explanation of civilisations, both Huntington and Montesquieu are agreed on the above description of the Hindus. Comparing the physical vigour of the nations, Huntington writes, "India offers an impressive contrast to these Western nations. Its people, as a whole, seem to be born tired."<sup>13</sup> And again, "Gandhi and 'non-cooperation' illustrate the kind of national philosophy which prevails among people deficient in physical vigour. Non-resistance however is perfectly natural in India. Even the Moslems there accept it. They may flash briefly into fierce activity but soon the tired feeling makes them quiescent."<sup>14</sup> Montesquieu wrote in a similar vein, "The Indians are naturally a pusillanimous people; even the children of Europeans born in India lose the courage peculiar to their own climate."<sup>15</sup> He goes on to argue that the excess of heat has had such an enervating effect on the physique of the people that tiredness is communicated to the mind, with inaction coming to be prized as the most valuable thing in life. The above description of the Hindus is as true and complete as any simplistic explanation must be. The correct position is stated by Kimbal Young who, discussing the quietistic and pacifistic tribes like the Zunis and Hopis, writes that these and other groups like Quakers "illustrate the fact that culture plays a large part in stimulating or reducing aggression. As we shall see, it is not that these latter groups show no aggression, but rather that it takes a milder and less violent forms."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> B. L. Atreya, "Indian Culture" in *Interrelations of Cultures*, p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> E. Huntington, *The Mainsprings of Civilisation*, p. 304.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>15</sup> de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, p. 224.

<sup>16</sup> K. Young, *Handbook of Social Psychology*, p. 45.

*Love*

From anger to love is a far cry. The attitude to love is positive and the *Gita* attempt to create the fear of love has apparently failed. This is quite understandable. With all the possibilities of disappointments and frustrations, love yet has its own rewards. Although aggression has its value for the survival of the individual in the struggle for existence, life would be emptier without love. As a source of life, therefore, love is indispensable.

A character full of love is like a river without a wave.  
[JENSEN, 3145.]

If there is love the impossible becomes possible.  
[JENSEN, 3146.]

Love is all important and it is its own reward. [JENSEN, 3147.]

He who is not melted by anything else may be melted by love (sexual). [JENSEN, 3150.]

If given with love, a handful is sufficient. [CARR, 1581.]  
Food given without affection, is as food offered to the dead. [CARR, 1582.]

Love as the cotton does, which in life shields thee and goes with thee in death. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 402.]

Who are loved in this world are loved in heaven.  
[CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 402.]

Love of men leads to love of God. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 408.]

Eyes meet eyes, and love slips out between. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 408.]

The boat of affection ascends even mountains.  
[CHAMPION, Bengali, p. 393.]

With affection two can lie on the leaves of a tamarind ; without, not even on arum leaves. [CHAMPION, Bengali, p. 393.]

Love laughs at caste distinctions. Let your love be as a Hindu wife ; with you in life and with you in death. [CHAMPION, Indian, p. 413.]

Cupid has no eyes. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 430.]

It is sufficiently clear from the above that any ethical teaching which goes against love has a very difficult battle to win. But the very fact of there being a battle is enough to take away the spontaneity and fullness of love. Love may still be there but not without a sense of conflict. And the conflict may well be of a nature that brings guilt and anxiety in its train. Love, in disobedience of conscience, cannot be altogether sweet. Though love has not been smothered, it is neither free nor full.

### *Desire And Anxiety*

As long as there is desire, there is anxiety. [JENSEN, 2653.]

Though you assume the guise of a religious mendicant, the anxieties of life will not cease. [JENSEN, 2654.]

Even the ocean cannot contain the anxieties of mortal life. [JENSEN, 2655.]

Mental worry is loss of strength. [JENSEN, 2660.]

A little desire, immense loss. [JENSEN, 2019.]

Who has reached the limit of his desire ? [CARR, Sanskrit, 69.]

Desire upon desire (causes) the greatest sorrow ; contentment the greatest happiness. [CARR, Sanskrit, 70.]

There is no limit to desire. [CARR, 213.]

Lust is bottomless. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 402.]

Pleasure is the seed of trouble. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 403.]

Asceticism is better than life's cares. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 421.]

There is no disease like hope (suspense). [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 421.]

Abstinence is the best medicine. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 429.]

Lust is a burning block of wood in a house not on fire. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 433.]

Where is your enemy? In your bosom. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 400.]

If we have it we loathe it; if we have it not we long for it even in our dreams. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 422.]

Depression first maims the mind and then kills the body. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 399.]

Merit diminishes by happiness, sin by pain. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 422.]

If you bear trouble you will see happiness. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 422.]

This is an exceptional proverb.

These proverbs fully vindicate the *Gītā* stand. Desires are regarded as basically unfriendly and harmful, causing trouble and anxiety; there is no appreciation of its value. There is absolutely no notion of the constructive aspect of the conflict inherent in the multiplicity of desires. Dixon has well remarked, "It has occurred to few philosophers that the discords may be a factor in the scheme, that the situation may have its advantages, a brighter side, and may be even a necessary condition of existence."<sup>17</sup> The Hindu view looks upon desires only as frustrating, disappointing, pain-producing. It suggests not so much that life without desires would be happier as that happiness is possible only when desires are not there.

Pessimism is a natural outcome of such a view. It was not for nothing that Schopenhauer was strongly attracted by Indian philosophy. Refuting the commonly held view that Christianity

<sup>17</sup> W. M. Dixon, *The Human Situation*, p. 190.

changed Europe, Dixon writes, "On the contrary, Europe transformed Christianity. It was an Eastern and ascetic creed, a creed of withdrawal from life rather than of participation in its fierce conflicts and competitions and was so understood in the early centuries. But the Western races were not prepared to abandon the world. Their energies were too great, the natural man in them too unsubduable."<sup>18</sup> Dixon has dealt with this subject at many places in his famous book. Mocking at the labelling of withdrawal as 'the Celestial way,' Dixon notes the difference between the attitude of Heraclitus and the one found "full-front" in Indian philosophy. He writes, "Thought is there [in Indian philosophy] concentrated on retreat, and the way of retreat proclaimed as the way of salvation. Destroy it, and your foot is on the heavenly path. Escape from the contending opposites is the wise man's goal, to be attained with the Stoics, by desirelessness, a passionless impassivity, a disdain alike of pleasure and of pain."<sup>19</sup> Radhakrishnan observes, "Almost every critic of Indian philosophy and culture harps on its pessimism."<sup>20</sup> He quotes Chailley as saying that Indian philosophy springs "from lassitude and desire for eternal rest."<sup>21</sup> Montesquieu has almost similar remarks to offer.<sup>22</sup> Radhakrishnan is at pains to defend Indian philosophy from this charge. He asks, "We cannot, however, understand how the human mind can speculate freely and remodel life when it is filled with weariness and overcome by a feeling of hopelessness."<sup>23</sup> There will be more than one opinion whether the Hindu mind has speculated freely, considering the way in which religion and philosophy have always been inseparably mixed up here. This is best brought out by comparing Hindu philosophy with the Greek. Introducing the two volumes on history of philosophy, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad writes, "This fact shows clearly the difference between the Indian and the Greek spirit. In Greece elements of religion acquired the characteristics of philosophy; in India philosophy was itself

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>20</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol., p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 224-226.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

turned into religion."<sup>24</sup> As for remodelling the life, opinions would be more unanimous on the point that external environment has not received the same attention here as it has done in the West. To quote again Maulana Azad: "Philosophical enquiry from the earliest times has adopted one of two alternate ways of approaching its problems. One is through the world of man's inner being and the other through the world external to him. The characteristic of Indian thought is that it has paid greater attention to the inner world of man than to the outer world."<sup>25</sup> It stands to reason that a view of the world as illusion (*māyā*) could not harmonise with any great care for it. Life is a bondage and the world is a prison. The criterion of pessimism is not "dissatisfaction with what is or exists" but whether life is (fundamentally) taken as a joyous experience or not. To the decisive question on pessimism whether life is a source of happiness or unhappiness, the outstanding authority on the history of Indian philosophy, Surendranath Dasgupta gives us a categorical answer: "There is an inherent pessimism in most systems of Indian thought, which consider that normally we are all under the evil influence of false knowledge and are all gliding on the downward path of sins and afflictions. They also consider that all attachments lead to bondage and slavery to passions, and thereby lead us away from the path of liberation."<sup>26</sup>

The pessimism of the Hindus is best brought out by comparing it with the attitude of the Greeks, the daring optimists of the West. "The Greek has his asceticism, but it is no mortification of the senses. It is just the power to refuse a lesser good for the sake of the greater. Such asceticism, an alert and constant effort after betterness, is a tonic, a strengthening of fibre, an added increment to life."<sup>27</sup> The same could not be said of the Hindus, unless something beyond this life is taken to be the greater good.

<sup>24</sup> Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, "The Meaning of Philosophy" in S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 414.

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Jane Harrison. Quoted by C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Asceticism (Buddhist)*, *Encyclopædia of Ethics and Religion* (1900), Vol. II, p. 70.

### *Conscience*

How are desires controlled? Is it by guilt or by shame? Perhaps there is no culture where, or individual in whom, only one mechanism of either guilt or shame exclusively operates. Exclusive operation of guilt would mean a psychotic state of mind, without any contact with the external, objective world. Similarly, if shame alone were to inhibit desire, it would require extraordinary sensitiveness to the opinion of others, without any internalized sense of justice (too much of other-directedness of Riesman). Most cultures and individuals lie somewhere between these extremes. Despite the difficulties pointed out by Piers and Singer<sup>28</sup> in characterising cultures by guilt or shame, the writer would suggest that Hindu character is more guilt-ridden than shame-driven.

Kroeber has observed, "But shame is partly externalized: it is a feeling with reference to others. Sense of sin, however, is internal. One can feel sinful in solitude, over an act involving no hurt to others. Sin implies a disapproving conscience within; shame the knowledge that others disapprove; though both could be, and usually are present."<sup>29</sup> Hindu thought would seem to abound with ideas of sin. Even ordinary admonitions are given not in terms of good and bad but in terms of virtue and sin.

Consider the following in the light of the above: "The shame-driven individual has better potentialities as to maturation and progress. His primary identifications may be healthier to start with, his later identifications may permit him to proceed from the original images to siblings, peers and broader aspects of the social environment. If his ambitious drive is coupled with creativeness, it may actually lead to spontaneous curing of the original narcissistic wound. The guilt-ridden person introjects and expels ("extrojects"); the shame-driven identifies and compares. Whereas the shame-driven might be propelled beyond his natural limitations and break, the guilt-ridden as a rule will not even reach his potentialities."<sup>30</sup> One is tempted to explain the

<sup>28</sup> G. Piers and M. B. Singer, *Shame And Guilt: A Psychoanalytic And A Cultural Study*.

<sup>29</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology*, p. 612.

<sup>30</sup> G. Piers in *Shame And Guilt*, p. 29.

deficiencies in Hindu character on the lines suggested by Piers and Singer. But that will have to wait for better validation.

Desire incites, the fear of shame prevents. [CARR, 215.]

Each person's heart is his own witness. [JENSEN, 2712.]

Conscience will gnaw the heart. [JENSEN, 2713.]

The deceitful heart is ever restless. [JENSEN, 2715.]

The guilty conscience is a foe that lives with us.  
[JENSEN, 2717.]

A guilty conscience murmurs ; an ear full of wax itches.  
[JENSEN, 2718.]

There is no deceit without the doer's mind being conscious of it. [JENSEN, 2720.]

What! to tell a lie, while your heart knows the truth ?  
[JENSEN, 2725.]

The heart is its own witness. [JENSEN, 2727.]

The heart is its own friend or enemy. [JENSEN, 2728.]

### *Friendship And Close Intimacy*

If distant, even enemies are friends. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 431.]

Separation secures manifest friendship. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 431.]

When apart, even enmity becomes friendship.  
[CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 431.]

No friend like a brother ; no enemy like a brother.  
[CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 398.]

If (two people) live at a distance, their hatred will turn into friendship. [JENSEN, 2739.]

If friends live apart their friendship is close. [JENSEN, 2742.]

Will the temple cat fear the gods ? [JENSEN, 2746.]

Two bodies, but one soul. [JENSEN, 2748.]

Like soul and body. [JENSEN, 2749.]

A close friend is nectar to one's life. [JENSEN, 2750.]

These proverbs show a grasp of ambivalence of feeling. The full import of these proverbs go beyond such themes as 'familiarity breeds contempt' or 'distance lends enchantment.' It is not so much an illusory quality like enchantment that is suggested as a positive transformation of hate into love. Even the proverb on temple-cat does not show so much that 'familiarity breeds contempt' as that awe disappears when familiarity increases. In other proverbs, the imagery of close intimacy is in terms of physical incorporation. One proverb shows the sweet and life-giving role of friendship.

### *Women*

When young, a woman is a joy; when old, she is a vexation. [JENSEN, 3427.]

Why adorn an obedient woman? [JENSEN, 3430.]

A woman's virtue is her dowry. [JENSEN, 3432.]

Simplicity is the ornament of women. [JENSEN, 3434.]

Though she be a king's daughter, she is only a woman to her husband. [JENSEN, 3435.]

Were woman and gold ever defeated? [JENSEN, 3454.]

Though you may ill-treat a man you should never ill-treat a woman. [JENSEN, 3462.]

Though you see a woman's sin with your own eyes, cover it over with earth. [JENSEN, 3464.]

A woman without a husband has no happiness. [JENSEN, 3498.]

A woman without a husband is like the sand of a river. [JENSEN, 3499.]

The beauty of a woman without a husband is in vain. [JENSEN, 3500.]

A poor man's wife is likely to be any man's love.  
[JENSEN, 3501.]

Women are the great root of the family-rooted tree of enmity. [CARR, Sanskrit, 283.]

The husband is the life of the woman. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1348.]

Whom on earth will a handsome woman not subdue?  
[CARR, Sanskrit, 101.]

In the absence of men, all women are chaste. [CARR, Sanskrit, 270.]

To educate a woman is like placing a knife in the hands of a monkey. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

Woman is the chief gate to hell. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

Three are inconstant: woman, wind and wealth.  
[CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

Regard not a woman's word. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

Women and chickens get lost by wandering from house to house. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

Where there are women, there is trouble. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

All pretty maids are poisonous pests; an enemy kills by hiding, these by smiles and jests. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 408.]

A hare and a woman are yours while in your power.  
[CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 409.]

Woman is a poisonous creeper; avoid her company; her love destroys faith, caste, wealth and money.  
[CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 409.]

Woman, thou hast three good qualities and four hundred thousand bad; to sing; to burn (as *sati*) and to produce sons. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 409.]

A woman weeps without a husband and a field without rain. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 409.]

He who trusts a woman will walk on duckweed in a pool. [CHAMPION, Indian, p. 415.]

A thousand men may live together in harmony; two women cannot, even though they be sisters. [CHAMPION, India, p. 415.]

Is anyone ever tired of women and wealth? [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 435.]

For sweetness, honey; for love, a wife. [CHAMPION, Bengali, p. 394.]

He who is guilty of sin easily begets daughters. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 421.]

Some of the proverbs acknowledge the sexual aspect of woman: the sexual pleasure she can give to man and the power she derives from it. The writer feels that the role of a temptress and the extreme powers of her seduction, as believed by the Hindus, are not fully brought out by these proverbs. *Mahābhārata* contains any number of stories where women have been used as seducers to cancel out the religious merit gained by ascetics.<sup>21</sup> The central plot of *Rāmāyana* weaves round the fact that Ravana took Sita away by force, so smitten by her beauty he was. Popular notion ascribes to women seven times more sexual desire than to men. Even if this be regarded as projection of male sexuality on women, proverbs still do not properly indicate it.

Advising a student on his conduct towards his teacher and his wife, Manu remarks, "When the wife of his teacher belongs to the same caste, he shall give her the same respect as her husband receives. But he must not wash her feet, shampoo her body, or dress her hair. *Nor may he clasp her feet unless she is old. Because it is in the nature of women in this world to seduce men.* A wise man is always on his guard in the presence of females. *Even when alone with his mother, sister and daughter,*

<sup>21</sup> The most famous case is that of Vishwamitra who was seduced by Menaka, of which union a girl, Shakuntala was born. Shakuntala later gave birth to Bharat, after whom presumably our country is named Bhārat.

*he must beware, for the senses are powerful and can deprive a wise man of his wisdom.*"<sup>22</sup> (italics mine) And again, "It is well known that women are naturally prone to do evil. They are devoid of all real affection, fickle in temper; *and very fond of sexual intercourse.* They do not ask whether a man is *old or young, ugly or beautiful.* All they care for is to get possession of man."<sup>23</sup> (italics mine)

The dependence of woman on man and her inferior place is recognised. The narrowness of woman and her disruptive role of causing quarrel and disputes is also noted.

The importance of woman is recognised in such proverbs as these:

A house without a wife is a burning-ground. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 435.]

A wife is the ornament of the house. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 435.]

If the wife be sensible there will be good management, if not there will be ruin. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1340.]

It should be noted that women as such are feared, even dreaded. But as soon as relationship is established, whether of wife or of mother, she becomes a manageable entity.

### *Envy And Jealousy*

Like the woman who struck her own stomach when she heard that her next door neighbour had born a child. [JENSEN, 575.]

When her husband's brother's wife gets a child, can this woman also get one? [JENSEN, 580.]

When the accountant's clerk's wife saw that accountant's wife had put on an ear ring, she cut off her own ears. [JENSEN, 581.]

<sup>22</sup> J. M. Macfie (Ed.), *The Laws of Manu*, p. 38.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

As the barren woman sighed and wept when she saw her who had a child. [JENSEN, 586.]

Even if I am ruined, let my enemy prosper. [JENSEN, 587.]

The last proverb is unique.

All the proverbs on this topic relate to women, supporting the earlier view of woman as narrow-minded and given to causing troubles. One does not know if men are really as free from these feelings of jealousy and envy as these proverbs suggest. The preponderance of motherhood as subject of envy should be noted. It shows the high valuation of motherhood.

### *Mother*

A mother's love is best of all. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 403.]

Whom will he help who does not his mother? [CHAMPION, Indian p. 413.]

A father for the profitable son, a mother for the unprofitable. [CHAMPION, Marathi, p. 423.]

If the mother dies, the father becomes an uncle. [CHAMPION, Tamil, p. 431.]

Who are related to each other? The mother and her child. [CHAMPION, Tamil, 433.]

The mother is a divinity, a father a treasure. [CHAMPION, Telugu, p. 437.]

A mother can be trusted with secrets. [JENSEN, 3258.]

A son, who does not help his mother, is worthless to all men. [JENSEN, 3259.]

She reared her child with meat, while she ate bones. [JENSEN, 3261.]

Will not the creeper bear the weight of its own fruit? [JENSEN, 3264.]

Is the fruit too heavy for the tender creeper?  
[JENSEN, 3266.]

One may buy everything except a mother and a father.  
[JENSEN, 3269.]

What a mother will not forgive her child, the village will not forgive either. [JENSEN, 3272.]

A child that has not seen its mother's face, and a crop that has not seen the face of the rain, will not thrive.  
[JENSEN, 3273.]

A child that will not obey its mother is like a rag in a dog's mouth. [JENSEN, 3273.]

No temple is more beautiful than one's mother. [JENSEN, 3276.]

Eat excrement for the child's sake. [JENSEN, 3285.]

The mother's heart is tender, the child's hard. [JENSEN, 3287.]

His mother will look to his stomach; his wife at his waist cloth. [JENSEN, 3288.]

A mother may be a devil, but may you evade her commands? [JENSEN, 3289.]

She who burns her mother's heart will never prosper.  
[JENSEN, 3291.]

India is a land where women as mothers get their supreme place. The proverbs are self-explanatory, showing the high regard in which mothers are and should be held. Jensen, the collector of Tamil proverbs has observed, "In the chapter on a mother, it is at once evident that most of the proverbs have little or nothing connecting them but this, that they refer to a mother. In the same chapter we get also a good insight into the way in which India regards a mother in all her capacities. In an hour's time one can by studying the chapter on a mother get some real knowledge of her position in India,—a knowledge one could hardly get from any other sources."<sup>24</sup> The position of father is

<sup>24</sup> H. Jensen, *op. cit.*, p. x.

definitely lower. According to Manu, father is hundred times greater than teacher but mother is thousand times greater than father.<sup>35</sup>

Obedience to mother is, therefore, enjoined upon. Disobedience and disrespect to her will no doubt cause harm to children, some supra-human agency will bring it about. But the mother must never wish her children ill, ungrateful though they might be ; it supports the self-sacrificing picture of mother in the preceding chapter.

### *Mother-In-Law*

A mother-in-law for a daughter-in-law and a teacher for a boy. [JENSEN, 3634.]

Even the mother-in-law was once a girl from some house in the country. [JENSEN, 3638.]

No daughter-in-law praises her mother-in-law and no mother-in-law praises her daughter-in-law. [JENSEN, 3640.]

Is not my mother-in-law going to die, and put an end to my anxiety ? [JENSEN, 3642.]

If the mother-in-law breaks a pot, it is only clay, but if the daughter-in-law breaks one, it is gold. [JENSEN, 3643.]

The pot broken by the mother-in-law was a cracked pot. The pot broken by the daughter-in-law was a new pot. [JENSEN, 3643.]

Like the daughter-in-law lamenting the death of her mother-in-law. [CARR, 48.]

Giving her child her mother-in-law's name, she threw it into fire. [CARR, 53.]

There is no goodness in a mother-in-law, nor sweetness in Margosa tree. [CARR, 54.]

<sup>35</sup> *Manusmriti*, Ch. II, 145.

When there is no mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law is perfect ; where there is no daughter-in-law the mother-in-law is good-tempered. [CARR, 55.]

There is no softness in a sword, nor goodness in a mother-in-law. [CARR, 532.]

The daughter-in-law enters the house (as a bride) and the mother-in-law enters the Ganges (dies). [CARR, 711.]

Six months after the death of the mother-in-law, tears came into the eyes of the daughter-in-law. [CARR, 2146.]

A fool in the village but a lord in the opinion of his mother-in-law. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1351.]

The daughter-in-law must dance to the mother-in-law's tune. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1367.]

A teacher for a boy, a mother-in-law for a girl. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1353.]

I am glad mother-in-law has gone (is dead), the whole house is now in my hands. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1363.]

When her mother-in-law dies and her father-in-law lives the bride reigns supreme. [FALLON, p. 212.]

The mother-in-law died, and the daughter-in-law gave birth to a son ; And so the account was balanced. [FALLON, p. 212.]

There is neither mother-in-law nor sister-in-law, so she is happy by herself. [FALLON, p. 212.]

Mother-in-law's bad habits ; she hates my husband to be kind to me. [MANWARING, Marathi, 1365.]

On becoming a mother-in-law the torments of being a daughter-in-law are forgotten. [MANWARANG, Marathi, 1366.]

Other sources would complement these proverbs in showing that the subject of mother-in-law is highly charged with feeling. Though seemingly at the other end of the attitude to mother, the

antagonism associated with mother-in-law owes not a little to the reverence in which mothers are held. Mother-in-law hostility is the other side of the coin of mother-love. It is not without significance that all the disturbances of relationship relate to the daughter-in-law and never to the son-in-law. The answer that chances of friction are much greater because the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law live together, is not enough. Even sons-in-law at times live permanently with the parents-in-law and it is always taken as indicative of the love that the latter has for the former. There is something more deep-seated in the mother-in-law—daughter-in-law relationship than such extraneous factors as living together would suggest.

Dr. K. M. Kapadia writes, "A frequent pattern of behaviour between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law in the Hindu family is that of conflict arising out of the dominance of the latter over the former."<sup>26</sup> Dr. Kapadia attaches much more importance to the fact of dominance than the writer feels one should for a proper appreciation of such a peculiar human relationship as this. Are Hindu mothers-in-law of such a domineering type that they enjoy power for the sake of power? Barring individual deviations, there is no ground to suppose that such a type commonly prevails. And, is the young Hindu wife so 'independent' that she would resent the superior position of the much older mother-in-law? It must be remembered that children are brought up to be obedient, and respect for elders is very deliberately inculcated in them. Besides, husband's mother is to be regarded as her own mother by the young wife. In the writer's opinion, there is no ground to suppose that dominance has any great part to play in it, unless it is taken as indicative of something deeper-lying. "She is still the mistress of the house and feels embittered at the presence of the new person who now has the affection of her son."<sup>27</sup> What Kapadia casually mentions in the latter half of the sentence contains the seed of truth. It is not so much the dominance of the mother-in-law over the daughter-in-law that is resented by the latter as the dominance of mother over the son that is disliked and grudged by the wife.

<sup>26</sup> K. M. Kapadia, *Marriage and Family in India*, p. 245.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

One could go deeper into the problem and see the jealousy of two women for the possession and control of a man's love. Viewed thus, disputes regarding authority in home, control over purse, etc., resolve themselves into external signs of who enjoys the love and loyalty of the man. Very uneven strengths are brought into conflict here: the mother, by her age and experience is more capable of giving tender love, while wife alone can give sexual happiness. Not unoften, Hindu men are found wavering between the two.

As for the sweet relationship between the mother-in-law and son-in-law, the attraction that members of opposite sex exert on each other would be a good enough explanation as far as it goes. But there is no hostility on the part of the father-in-law towards the son-in-law as any sort of a rival. Son-in-law most obviously represents a son-figure and the lack of rival feeling that characterised father's attitude to son is repeated here in case of son-in-law.

### *Children*

Will that which is not bent at the age of five, bend when it is fifty years old ? [JENSEN, 3299.]

Will a child who is ignorant at five, be clever at fifty ? [JENSEN, 3300.]

A child brought up without beating, and a moustache that is not twirled well, will not develop properly. [JENSEN, 3301.]

Can you bend in the tree what was not bent in the sapling ? [JENSEN, 3303.]

Not only the plasticity of childhood but even the rigidity of later years is acknowledged. From this it would appear that childhood could not be an altogether blissful phase of all-indulgence in that control is either learnt then or is never learnt at all.

*The Tongue*

One's body was born for one's own benefit, but one's tongue for (the benefit or ruin) of many. [JENSEN, 2499.]

Whatever else you do not subdue, subdue your tongue. [JENSEN, 2501.]

A tongue that has no bones says everything. [JENSEN, 2502.]

A slip of the tongue is worse than a slip of the foot that walks. [JENSEN, 2503.]

If the tongue move, the country will move. [JENSEN, 2504.]

Did you go to speak or to die? [JENSEN, 2506.]

What is in the heart will come into the mouth. [JENSEN, 2685a.]

Each man's speech accords with his caste. [JENSEN, 2686.]

The good and the bad (are known) by the tongues. [JENSEN, 2688.]

Good and evil are in the tongue. [JENSEN, 2689.]

In the tongue is good and evil. [JENSEN, 2690.]

Greatness and littleness come by the mouth, or is known by words. [JENSEN, 2694.]

Speech pierces like arrows and nails. [JENSEN, 2783.]

The words spoken that day have effect for generations. [JENSEN, 2784.]

Keep your tongue, and keep your friend. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 404.]

The tongue can mount you on an elephant; the tongue can behead you. [CHAMPION, Hindi, p. 405.]

The tongue because it has no bone says various things. [CHAMPION, Assamese, p. 414.]

We are the masters of the unspoken words, but the spoken word masters us. [CHAMPION, Indian, p. 415.]

*Words*

A kind word is a blessing, but a harsh word will pain.  
[JENSEN, 2786.]

If you hear a harsh word, your ears will blister. [JENSEN, 2787.]

Time passes, but words remain. [JENSEN, 2789.]

Kind words conquer. [JENSEN, 2790.]

If your foot slips you may recover your balance, but if your mouth slips you cannot recall your words. [CARR, 613.]

If your words are good, the world will be good to you.  
[CARR, 1352.]

*Pen*

Though the stab of the sword may fail, the stab of the pen will not fail. [CARR, 552.]

Is the sword sharp or the pen? [CARR, 553.]

*Curses*

May he be struck dead. [JENSEN, 1515.]

May your funeral take place. [JENSEN, 1516.]

May earth fall into your mouth, i.e. you may die!  
[JENSEN, 1517.]

May you be laid on the bier, and take your journey.  
[JENSEN, 1518.]

May your *thali* be cut off and fall into water pot!  
[JENSEN, 1519.]

May your wife's *thali* fall on your corpse.. [JENSEN, 1520.]

May you have to eat your own child, and drink water after it. [JENSEN, 1521.]

May Death blight your prospects. [JENSEN, 1522.]

May your hair be dishevelled (widowhood). [JENSEN, 1524.]

May you be cut down and sacrificed! [JENSEN, 1524.]

May you be taken away while you struggle for life! [JENSEN, 1525.]

May your pride become dust! [JENSEN, 1526.]

May you go to grave alone! [JENSEN, 1528.]

May your lips be bleached white, and white ants gnaw one of your sides! [JENSEN, 1529.]

He will be laid on his funeral pile! [JENSEN, 1530.]

May scrofula come out on your neck. [JENSEN, 1531.]

May you be hidden in the pit of the goddess of small-pox. [JENSEN, 1532.]

May raw rice be put into your mouth (Death). [JENSEN, 1533.]

May your deceit choke you! [JENSEN, 1534.]

Words are believed to have overwhelming power, both for good as well as for bad, although much more for bad than for good.

The proverbs on curses abound in death-wishes. These are obviously the projection of early intense aggression. It would appear that at some stage in the development of the Hindu child, the conscience becomes so severe that aggression is substantially muted for adult life. Aggression suited to genital stage, giving a sense of mastery and power, is thereby denied.

#### *Kill Evil At Its Very Birth*

Though it be only a young snake you beat, it won't do to leave it half dead. [JENSEN, 433.]

Though the snake be only a span long, a stick a cubit long is needed to kill it. [JENSEN, 435.]

A snake must be killed while in the egg and a tiger while it is young. [JENSEN, 436.]

It shows faith in the growth of evil. The other proverbs below show that even little evil can destroy much good. The problem of ambivalence of feelings has been solved by splitting the good from the bad. The contrary feelings have not been tolerated and worked out. Naturally, any coming together again of the good and the bad is dreaded. The good has had, as it were, a hot-house growth and only in that protected atmosphere can it grow. It is a strange goodness that cannot stand up to badness!

#### *Little Evil Destroys Much Good*

A little desire destroys a penance carried on for a long time. [JENSEN, 2013.]

A thousand good qualities will be thwarted by avarice. [JENSEN, 2014.]

Though there will be only as much fire as a grain of mustard, it will burn a stack. [JENSEN, 2016.]

#### *Permanence Of Evil*

Though he went on a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram, his evil destiny is not expiated. [JENSEN, 516.]

Though he went to Benaras, his sins are not expiated. [JENSEN, 520.]

Can spoiled milk become good milk ? [JENSEN, 522.]

Will a bad man get rid of his sin by bathing in the Ganges ? [JENSEN, 523.]

Even if you give a thousand gold pieces, can you regain the chastity lost for half a copper coin ? [JENSEN, 514.]

Though I say to him, I will heap up pure gold for you ; he says, My (bad) nature won't leave me. [JENSEN, 528.]

From the splitting of the good from the bad, it follows that the good will remain weak and the bad will continue to exist.

Since the good does not have to contend with the bad, it can never develop the toughness nor can it ever reduce the bad. If love and hate are allowed to come together, a new equilibrium may be reached where love is strong enough to keep hate in check or hate is not so deadly as to be mortally feared.

*A Master Is Necessary*

Will an army without a King fight ? [JENSEN, 1379.]

A country without a King is a house without a man in it. [JENSEN, 1380.]

Will a sword cut without a person to wield it ? [JENSEN, 1381.]

A horse without a bridle. [JENSEN, 1382.]

A top without a string. [JENSEN, 1383.]

While the head is still, will the tail wag ? [JENSEN, 1385.]

*Money*

A man without money is a beast. [CARR, Sanskrit, 241.]

A man without money is like cotton. [CARR, Sanskrit, 242.]

A man without money is chaste. [CARR, Sanskrit, 1394.]

Money makes iron float. [CHAMPION, Bengali, p. 394.]

*Wealth*

Wealth is the paramour of all castes. [CARR, Sanskrit, 560.]

There is pain in acquiring wealth, pain in preserving what has been acquired, pain in its loss, and pain in its expenditure—Why have such a receptacle of sorrow ? [CARR, Sanskrit. 39.]

Proverbs, being close to life, cannot ignore wealth. Its value is obvious ; only the last proverb takes a negative attitude.

*Rich And Poor*

The King's command is but a word, but it lays a burden on the head of his slave. [JENSEN, 1694.]

Thousands of rupees go to the royal palace; what can the (poor) farmer do? [JENSEN, 1699.]

Your order is but a word to you, it cost me my breath. [JENSEN, 1699.]

If all should sit in palanquins, who would carry them? [JENSEN, 1700.]

The words of the poor will not reach the assembly. [JENSEN, 1701.]

The tears of poor people are like sharp swords (against the rich). [JENSEN, 1702.]

All small fish are food for big ones. [JENSEN, 1708.]

Fun to the jackal, but agony to the crab. [JENSEN, 1710.]

The snake (when catching a frog) thinks of its own hunger, the frog thinks of its fate. [JENSEN, 1717.]

What is sport to the cat, is death to the rat. [JENSEN, 1719.]

The fundamental opposition between the rich and the poor is recognised. But there is no passive surrender to this social division; on the contrary, a lot of resentment is to be seen.

*When Inferior People Are Raised Above Their Station*

In harvest time a rat keeps five wives (when rich, poor live extravagantly). [JENSEN, 703.]

Like tying coconut to the neck of a bird. [JENSEN, 708a.]

If you honour a sparrow, it will hop on all the pots and pans, and make them bang against each other. [JENSEN, 710.]

*The Worthless Cannot Be Improved*

Though you wipe off the dirt and place her in your lap,  
the (mean) disposition of a slave girl will not leave her.  
[JENSEN, 675.]

Even if a crow bathe in Ganges, it will not become a  
swan. [JENSEN, 677.]

If a saddle is put on an ass, will it become horse?  
[JENSEN, 678.]

A black dog won't become a white dog. [JENSEN, 681.]

Though you wash a dog and put it in the household  
shrine, it will raise its tail and go and eat filth.  
[JENSEN, 683.]

Even if a crow is washed and bathed twice a day, it will  
not become a white crane. [JENSEN, 686.]

*The Natural Disposition Cannot Be Changed*

Will iron become fine gold, however often refined?  
[JENSEN 840.]

There is no priest who can change the natural disposition.  
[JENSEN, 841.]

What is born with you will not leave you even if beaten  
with slippers. [JENSEN, 842.]

However many perfumes you put on an onion it will  
still emit a bad smell. [JENSEN, 844.]

If you ask a woman, who goes about the street selling  
vegetables to sing a song, she will only go on crying,  
'Onions and Greens'! [JENSEN, 845.]

Habits acquired in the cradle last to the grave.  
[JENSEN, 850.]

All these proverbs suggest a fixity of human nature that can  
at best lead to a sense of calm superiority (as in the case of  
Brahmins), and at worst, to fatalistic resignation (as in the case  
of the low castes).

*Disgrace*

Is one veil sufficient to cover a women's wickedness ?  
[JENSEN, 379.]

The place on which he treads will take fire. [JENSEN, 380.]

This new moon he has no shame, nor will he have any next new moon. [JENSEN, 385.]

Though a person eats flesh, why string the bones and hang them round his neck (Why display evil ?) [JENSEN, 386.]

Written bonds are not needed for honest men or rogues.  
[JENSEN, 387.]

If I am wrong, shave my head and make me ride on an ass. [JENSEN, 389.]

Will the man who lies with his own mother regard any ties ? [JENSEN, 408.]

He will call his own mother to be his wife (Boundless evil). [JENSEN, 409.]

One who is lost to all shame is the big man of the village (due to lack of the restraint of shame). [JENSEN, 424.]

What is an elder or a younger sister to him who lies with his own mother. [JENSEN, 424.]

The last few proverbs show how incestuous desire is the greatest degradation of man. When a man wants to sleep with his mother or sister, there is nothing else that he would not do ; there is nothing worse that remains to be done.

*Selfishness*

Each one will exert himself for his own interest.  
[JENSEN, 343.]

If you come to our house what will you bring me ?  
If I go to your house, what will you give me ? [JENSEN, 397.]

However matters go he thinks only of his own affairs.  
[JENSEN, 348.]

When the banyan is ripe he is there, and when the pipal is ripe he is here. [JENSEN, 351.]

If we get what we want, we worship the idol as Rama or Govindan, if we do not get it, the idol is nought.  
[JENSEN, 356.]

Though the eldest daughter has her tali cut off (i.e. widowed) her mother will not care if she is well off herself. [JENSEN, 361a.]

If it concerns his own affair, even his cloth will be restless. [JENSEN, 364.]

He will find salt in the milk from his mother's breast (suspicion). [JENSEN, 365.]

Let me lose my respect (if necessary); I am satisfied, if I get fat. [JENSEN, 375.]

Oil your own wheel first. [CHAMPION, Bengali, p. 394.]

### *Learning*

Better is the hatred of a learned man than the friendship of a fool. [JENSEN, 1486.]

He who increases knowledge, increases sorrow. [JENSEN, 1490.]

Ignorance is better than imperfect learning. [JENSEN, 1493.]

A man without learning is a man without eyes. [JENSEN, 1495.]

The poverty of the learned is better than the wealth of unlearned. [JENSEN, 1496.]

He who teaches is a giver of eyes. [JENSEN, 1499.]

Whatever else may be destroyed, learning will not be destroyed. [JENSEN, 1501.]

What land is foreign to a learned man ? [JENSEN, 1505.]

The gem of learning is great wealth. [CARR, Sanskrit, 379.]

The possessor of learning becomes the possessor of wealth. [CARR, Sanskrit 380.]

The high valuation that is placed on learning as one of the great merits to be acquired is borne out by the above. The highest place in society was accorded to the Brahmins who were not only priests, but also men of learning. Perhaps only China has valued its learned men more than India has done.

### *Guru*

An ungodly spiritual guide is worthless. [JENSEN, 126.]

He who has conquered the five senses will be a priest of wisdom. [JENSEN, 127.]

This is the picture of the teacher that a Hindu reveres. It is not only his learning but his moral stature as peculiarly conceived by the Hindus, that entitles him to their life-long respect and regard.

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## CHAPTER VII

"The childhood shows the man  
As morning shows the day."

—JOHN MILTON,

*Paradise Regained*, iv, 1671.

"A man's character, as my readers are aware, assuredly comes to him from his father. It is a narrow-minded and ridiculous thing not to consider whose son a man is."

—SCHOPENHAUER,

*On Human Nature*, p. 66.

"Give us the child for eight years, and it will be a Bolshevik for ever."

—NIKOLAI LENIN,

Speech to the Commissars of Education, Moscow,  
1923.

## CHILDHOOD IN INDIA

It is the trend of modern psychological thinking to see the characteristics of the tree in the sapling that is planted. Notwithstanding the controversies, childhood is the most important key to the understanding of adult character. Unfortunately, the data available on Indian child development is all too meagre. But the challenging importance of childhood invites us to make a study of it even on the basis of the little data that we have.

The traits of Hindu culture so far examined must be deeply connected with the period of childhood. Whether the particular experiences of Hindu childhood have given rise to the type of culture the Hindus have or it is the culture that has caused those experiences to happen, we do not know. Causality apart, the fact of mutual reinforcement cannot be denied. An understanding of childhood is, therefore, bound to be of inestimable value.

In the absence of any data, derived from writer's field-work, childhood will have to be understood in the context of the traditional joint-family. In an article entitled *The Orthodox Hindu Family System*,<sup>1</sup> W. S. Taylor has contrasted the Hindu family system with the American and has pointed out that though ego-centricity is much more checked in the Hindu family, the process of socialisation is depersonalized here. He has dealt with this problem again in another article of his, *Basic Personality In Orthodox Hindu Culture Patterns*.<sup>2</sup> Hindu joint-family is an

<sup>1</sup> *Indian Journal of Social Work*, IV, 1948-44, pp. 168-170.

<sup>2</sup> *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 48, 1948, pp. 3-12.

'ambivalent' arrangement. The child has a sense of security in that there are many adults in the family with whom he can or rather must identify. But, by the same token, he cannot identify himself enough with any one particular person. The intellectual development of the child does not permit him to choose desirable components from each and construct a superior ideal therefrom for his identification and development. Even his sense of security must be weak. The firm sense of security that comes out of a total, wholehearted absorption with the parents would be missing here. The big family acquires somewhat the position of an impersonal system from where he can never be altogether rejected but to which he never wholly belongs. This weak foundation and the absence of a clear-cut personality for identification and imitation must be hampering the growth of the Hindu child towards maturity. Of course, joint-family is a better system than one where the child is without any sense of security. Its deficiency is brought out only when we think of the warmth and fullness that an ideal arrangement would have.

This difficulty of the child in a joint-family will be clear if we recall the story of Sarat Chandra Chatterji's *Bindur Chele*. Bindu is the wife of the younger brother who begins to look after the son of her husband's elder brother as her own child. The child is already faced with a problem, the problem of having two 'mothers,' none of whom he can love exclusively—he must distribute his love judiciously between two. When we realise the intensity with which a child loves or hates, we shall appreciate the acute difficulty of the boy. But things do not stop here. The mother and the hot-tempered aunt have a fight and they separate. The boy naturally remains with his own mother. In this situation of discord, the feelings of all the four adult characters are delineated and even such a sensitive writer as Sarat Chandra has failed to concern himself with the feelings of the boy whose heart must really be bleeding. The united world has fallen apart and the boy must be feeling an immense void. We do not know how many children must have broken their hearts in the Hindu joint-families under similar situations.

Lois Barclay Murphy remarks that "The children of India are the friendliest children I have ever seen. They trust people ;

their smile is wholehearted, warm and gay."<sup>3</sup> She later writes, "I did not see so much of the adolescents, but they did not appear so trusting, spontaneous, and friendly. A gloom settles down on adolescents like a fog and the warmth goes out of their faces."<sup>4</sup> Although Murphy has posed the question, she has not provided the answer. Developmentally, the super-ego is installed by the time the gloom settles down on the adolescent. Could it not be that the conscience has already become too harsh, that the load of guilt has already become too heavy? What else can kill the gaiety that was once there? Murphy has fruitfully discussed the question of aggression and has rightly concluded that "... aggression does not have the chance to be patterned and shaped as happens with us. Typically, we expect a child to use physical expressions of aggression until the age of four and gradually to substitute verbal methods of standing up for his rights, getting what he wants, or letting off steam."<sup>5</sup>

She has laid stress on the fact that aggression is not patterned because it is not evoked, in itself due to the comparatively non-frustrating childhood. But no childhood can be so non-frustrating as to account adequately for absence of aggression. (In this sense, the perfect happiness of childhood is only a myth.) Ambivalence is ingrained in the very nature of the feelings. How can any child help hating its parents? If not for the actual frustrations they impose, his complete dependence on them would fill him with impotent rage. J. C. Flugel has given an account of the process in the following words: "As we have already indicated (in Chapter 3), the arousal of such aggression is inevitable, inasmuch as parents are bound to frustrate their children in some degree, and it is likewise inevitable that a child's aggression cannot be fully and freely expressed, and this for two reasons: because the child is too weak to stand up to the opposition of the parents, and because at the same time it loves them and is dependent on them. Unable therefore to direct this aggression against its natural

<sup>3</sup> L. B. Murphy, "Indian Child Development" in Gardner Murphy, *In The Minds of Men*, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> "It is rare in the plains of India to see children playing noisily together. They all seem oppressed with the seriousness of life." B. Fuller, *Studies in Indian Life and Sentiment*, p. 1. 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.

object, the child must deal with it in some way: by repression, displacement or by turning it against himself. In the very young child the capacities for both repression and displacement are probably less than at a later age; there is therefore a special likelihood of recourse being made to the remaining alternative."<sup>9</sup> It is surprising that Murphy never mentions ambivalence nor does she show any implied recognition of it. Anyway, it is certain that the aggression of the Hindu child is evoked and must be aimed at either the parents or the parent-substitutes. And it is here that the relevance or even importance of the non-frustrating aspect of the parents is seen. Since the parents are not frustrating or not very frustrating in real life, the child will feel additional guilt for directing hate at such parents. As Flugel has shown, this aggression will hit back at the self which appears as the gloom on the adolescent.

Murphy has completely eschewed the word Oedipus complex. The period during which the change from friendliness to gloominess occurs is also the period when Oedipus complex is in its intense phase. It has been shown earlier that rivalry between the father and the son is not very keen here. But this does not prevent the child from hating and entertaining death-wishes towards the parent of the same sex; the child's grasp of objective reality is not so developed that he can appreciate the fact that father does not want to possess mother exclusively and that he does allow him fair share of her love. The guilt of destructive-wishes is again enhanced as and when the appreciation of the above fact grows on the child.

It is no wonder that with all this guilt, a strong super-ego is instituted to keep aggression in check and to enforce the punishment. Whenever violence is indulged in, it is in defiance of the conscience; it comes not in regulated manner but bursts in upon the individual. Murphy has well remarked, "When aggression is aroused (under pressure of economic and political stress) in Indian adults, then, it may burst out in primitive chaotic ways exactly because of the lack of the long slow experiences of patterning

\* *Man, Morals and Society*, pp. 95-96.

that we know."<sup>7</sup> Only sporadic and not sustained violence is allowed.<sup>8</sup>

A point of importance, noted by both L. B. Murphy and W. S. Taylor, is the closeness of relationship between the adults and the children. The two worlds of the adults and children are not sharply divided into water-tight compartments. "Infants and young children are not left at home, but accompany the family on visits, on the older children's wanderings about the village, even to the movies; they are not shut out or isolated. Their experience is predominantly an experience of being with the rest of the family."<sup>9</sup>

The age at and the method by which weaning is brought about and toilet-training is imposed, have considerable bearing on the growing individual. In Hindu society, breast-feeding is prolonged and toilet-training is not imposed with any harshness. "Breast-feeding is irregular but frequent, depending on when the child cries. Weaning is deferred as long as possible and a child may continue to suck intermittently after weaning, frequently for several months, sometimes for more than a year."<sup>10</sup> On toilet-training, Darling remarks, "A surprising point in this connection is that the village child is never taught to control itself in any way. Until it is of an age to observe the ways of its elders, it behaves like an untrained dog."<sup>11</sup> Darling observes that "Even in the households of educated zemindars no training is given."<sup>12</sup> And Fuller says, "There is little discipline of children in an Indian home. They are seldom punished: . . ."<sup>13</sup> Ordinarily such a situation should make for security and happiness. It would appear that in India these processes are carried a little too far, causing fixation on these early modes of

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> See Hermann M. Spitzer, "Psychoanalytical Approaches To The Japanese Character" in Géza Róheim (Ed.), *Psychoanalysis And The Social Sciences*, Vol. I, pp. 181-186.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> W. S. Taylor, "Basic Personality In Orthodox Hindu Culture Patterns," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 48, 1948, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> M. L. Darling, *Wisdom And Waste In The Punjab Village*, p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> B. Fuller, *Studies in Indian Life and Sentiment*, p. 164.

gratification and preventing maturational development to proceed. Hindus expect to be cared for in their adult life in a manner that is reminiscent of childhood. Murphy observes, "Indians find it natural both to take care of others . . . and to expect to be cared for. This is fostered at a deep level by the long period of infancy, and later by the governmental system under British rule; thus it is deeply frustrating and probably confusing when problems are not taken care of by some authority, as was true at the time of independence—there were too many problems for any new government to handle all at once."<sup>14</sup>

Although Murphy refers to the British rule as contributing to the helpless feeling, one notices the same situation after the lapse of a decade of freedom. As recently as 21st November, 1957, Prime Minister Nehru "laid the greatest stress on self-help which, he said, was the sheet-anchor for economic growth, success of the Plan and general advancement of the country. He strongly deprecated the tendency of the people to look to the Government for every little thing—then the States looking to the Centre for help and the country seeking help abroad. What troubled him was *this amazing capacity of the people to ask for help and their amazing incapacity to do something themselves.*"<sup>15</sup> (italics mine)

Taylor too has observed that "the recognition of helplessness becomes a claim to authority."<sup>16</sup> Taylor himself holds the doctrines of *Karma* and rebirth responsible for conveying an infinite sense of life in which a single life-span may be only a moment, "tending to produce a feeling that all the experiences of life are too insignificant to be worried about except those duties and rites which determine *Karma* and so control the indefinite future. This tends to discourage effort in every sphere except that in which initiative is necessarily replaced by obedience to *Dharma.*"<sup>17</sup> And again, "By making obedience to *Karma* the essential condition for escape from *Karma*, they effectively remove personal initiative and decision from the field of actions

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> *Indian Express*, 21st November, 1957.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

significant for the major purposes of life. By making the acceptance of one's *Karma* the absolute precondition of any future progress, they effectively lower the level of aspiration to the place where the danger of frustration is virtually eliminated, and make resignation and obedience primary ideals of life."<sup>11</sup> Helpless resignation is the price one pays for being relieved from the pangs of frustrations.

The above explanation is correct as far as it goes but is not basic to a psychological point of view. The question yet remains: why should an individual accept a doctrine the import of which is helplessness? It must be presumed that the individual is already prepared to accept such a doctrine. In the present writer's opinion, it is the Hindu's identification with mother that gives him the helpless orientation. Since father himself is dominated by his own mother-identification, it does not much help the son to identify with his father for gaining masculine qualities. Woman is visualized here, not only as nurturing but also as strength-giving. A culture that seeks to obtain strength from mother may not after all succeed in gaining much strength. One of the worthy sons of India declared: "The great feature of present day Hindu life is passivity. "Let it be so" sums up all their psychology, individual and social. They have got into the habit of taking things lying down. *They have imbibed this tendency and this psychology and this habit from their mothers.* It seems as if it was in their blood."<sup>12</sup> (*italics mine*)

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai in his Presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha Conference held in Bombay in December, 1925.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult to sum up a study of the nature attempted here. The field is too vast to be adequately treated in a work of the present dimension. From the arguments advanced in chapter I, it will be seen how very difficult it is to study thoroughly even a simple and homogeneous society. It is only the advanced and mature workers in the field who have attempted characterisation of complex peoples. It was the skill of Ruth Benedict, who was the main force behind Columbia University Research in Contemporary Cultures that helped her write on the Japanese. Mead, with all her anthropological experiences in studying the primitives, still had to spend two years in Bali before she wrote on the Balinese. And, of course, she had able collaborators to help her. Geoffrey Gorer, whom Mead has described as a leader in the field, wrote on Americans alone but collaborated with John Rickman in the study of the Russians. In his latest study of the English character, Gorer had the assistance of the research department of the Odhams Press. These few instances are mentioned to indicate the amount of resourcefulness requisite for even a partial study of a complex people. It also serves to show the inevitable limitations under which the present work has been carried out.

A word of personal explanation before we go further. Though not an orthodox Hindu, the writer is born and brought up as one. To study the culture in which one is born is a double-edged affair—he can see things from within but he cannot look at them from without. If he gains in the intimate understanding of the content of the culture, he loses in the objective appraisal

of the same. The natural tendency of such a situation is to write more with feeling than with understanding. Too much justification of the culture is yet another tragedy of this situation. The present writer has fought hard against such a weakness. Those who love Hindu culture and are full of admiration for it may find the approach of this work a little lukewarm or even cold. That Hindu civilisation is great needs no proving by any one today. There is no necessity to proclaim from the house-tops that the Hindus had achieved this or that in the ancient past. It is rather imperative for the Hindus to have the strength of maturity to see their faults and correct them, if possible, or tolerate them, if inevitable. But the faults must first be seen before they are either corrected or tolerated.

The stereotype of the Hindus as passive, mild etc., was taken as a rough hypothesis for this work. As will be seen by a perusal of the chapters, there is enough evidence to take the stereotype as valid. Of course, the suggestion of degeneracy, implicit (and, often explicit) in the Westerners attributing these qualities to the Hindus, is doubtless without ground and has been refuted in the body of the work. If the Hindu is mild, it is not because he is any less pugnacious, but because his conscience is stronger. (The climate of India, so often invoked to explain the character of its people, will only make for stronger instincts.) In having a more developed conscience, the Hindus show their superiority over the Westerners, although this over-severe conscience has recoiled on the Hindus themselves. The problem of aggression brings us to another syndrome of related qualities, viz., asceticism and pessimism. The weight of evidence is overwhelming in support of at least the first quality.<sup>1</sup>

One of the central assumptions of Gorer for the study of English character is the understanding of aggression. If the absence of fight in a bar, the sight of football crowds being as orderly as church meetings, and ungrudging queuing up of the English people can lead Gorer to attach central importance to aggression, it is all the more incumbent on a student of Hindu

<sup>1</sup> "Asceticism and monastic organization are two unique contributions which Indian civilization has made to the common stock of culture." G. S. Ghurye, *Indian Sadhus*, p. 1.

character to explore the course of this instinct more thoroughly. Gorer has said that if aggression is not manifested in public life, the other places of its release would be: (i) the family, (ii) dissipation in fantasy, in reading or dreaming, (iii) turning inwards on the self. In the light of these leads, how shall we regard the Hindus to have solved their problem of aggression? It is obvious that there is very little of violence in public life. (Recall the non-violent movement of India against the British.) The sporadic violence of riots, whether inter-communal or inter-provincial, are exceptions that only prove the general rule. Authority is anything but harsh in the Hindu household. Though some amount of aggression is worked off in idealising heroes like Rana Pratap, Jhansi-ki-Rani, Shivaji, Subhas Chandra Bose and others, this vicarious release could not be a major source of outlet. The chapter on films shows the type of heroes that are idealised in India. This leaves us with the last alternative, viz., self. It has been remarked that the preferred method of Indian hero is suicide and that aggression is released self-destructively. Hindu asceticism is of the masochistic and punitive variety.

As Gorer has noted, it is theoretically possible to argue that aggression has just disappeared but such a diminution or disappearance of aggression should be followed by increase in gaiety and spontaneity. These latter touchstones do not apply to the Hindus.

The repressed nature of aggression is best brought out by examining certain sections of the Hindus. Two extremes are brought together—suicide is extolled for human beings and extreme tenderness is shown towards the smallest of living thing. Extreme cruelty on the self is matched by complete kindness towards others.

Hindu character would be described as depressive in contrast to persecutory. A Hindu has no right but his duties are elaborate. He has to live out his life in discharge of the many debts that he owes to others. Although *artha* and *kama* are permitted as two of the four ideals of life, they are hedged in by numerous considerations, proceeding from *dharma* and *moksha*. Sex is not for pleasure but for begetting sons in order to keep

the line going so that the ancestors may continue to receive oblations for the peace of their souls.<sup>2</sup> Wealth is not to be acquired for personal glory but for the fulfilment of the duties associated with a householder.

This is a point of view which is too demanding, too exacting for the ordinary mortals to cheerfully accept. Those stout-hearted persons who have willingly accepted this conscience have risen to be giants among men. The glory of Hindu civilisation is due to such persons who totally submerged their self for the common good of all and staked their all for the highest ideals. But this is not the path that all can tread. A very high ideal can be a very frustrating thing, it may create a mood of such intense resignation that even ordinary improvements are not attempted in despair. It is necessary for the happiness of human mind that goals are realisable. The Hindu ideals are pitched so high and the price demanded for it is so great that only a few Hindus can succeed. That explains why a vast gap always exists between the few individuals who have succeeded in realising these impossibly high ideals, and the masses who can only wistfully look at them.<sup>3</sup>

Oddly enough, the two besetting weaknesses of Hindu character are, first, an over-severe conscience and, second, an over-indulgent childhood. Unless the conscience relaxes and unless the fixation on infantile stage is prevented, no great change in the Hindu character can be expected. The contact with the West has given rise to tendencies that go counter to the traditional ethos of Hindu society. Western influence has resulted in a greater sense of right and more care for the self. The Hindu sense of objective reality was traditionally very faulty. Here

<sup>2</sup> "Indian marriage is an impersonal contract, undertaken as a social debt, by men and women alike, *not for happiness but for the fulfilment of social and religious duties.*" (italics mine) Ananda Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva*, p. 169.

It is interesting that even in the *Kāmasūtra*, Vatsyasyana refers to the superiority of *dharma* and *moksha*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "The guilt-ridden person is held back, becomes constricted in his character, his earlier and subsequent identifications tend to be with unconstructive images, inactivity, passivity or turning against the self are his fate." G. Fiers in *Shame And Guilt: A Psychoanalytical And A Cultural Study*, p. 28.

again, the stimulus of the West has served as a corrective. Let us hope that the Hindus do not go the sensate way, but if the ideal of integration be a harmonious functioning of the ego, the super-ego and the id, the present Hindu balance needs correction. Let the id come out more freely, let the super-ego be less harsh and let the ego be stronger. A Hindu would be no less noble then and he may very well be happier.

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## APPENDIX

### Opinions on National Characters

If anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all the nations in the world the set of beliefs which he thought best, he would inevitably, after careful consideration of their relative merits, choose that of his own country. Everyone without exception believes his own native customs, and the religion he was brought up in, to be the best ; and that being so, it is unlikely that anyone but a madman would mock at such things.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 190.

Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners, yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world.

EDMUND BURKE, *Conciliation with America*.

I feel that you are justified in looking into the future with true assurance, because you have a mode of living in which we find the joy of life and the joy of work harmoniously combined. Added to this is the spirit of ambition which pervades your very being, and seems to make the day's work like a happy child at play.

ALBERT EINSTEIN, *New Year's Greeting*, 1931.

America means opportunity freedom, power.

EMERSON, *Uncollected Lectures: Public and Private Education*.

America is a country of young men.

EMERSON, *Society and Solitude: Old Age*.

America is the only place where man is fully grown!

O. W. HOLMES, *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*, ch. 4.

They [the Americans] equally detest the pageantry of a king, and the supercilious hypocrisy of a bishop.

JUNIUS, *Letters*, No. 35, 19 Dec., 1769.

Liberty has still a continent to live in.

HORACE WALPOLE, *Letter*, 17 Feb., 1719.

America lives in the heart of every man everywhere who wishes to find a region where he will be free to work out his destiny as he chooses.

WOODROW WILSON, *Speech*, Chicago, 6 April, 1912.

Sometimes people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am an American. America is the only idealistic nation in the world.

WOODROW WILSON, *Speech*, Sioux Falls, N. D., 8 Sept., 1919.

There is nothing the matter with Americans except their ideals. The real American is all right; it is the ideal American who is all wrong.

G. K. CHESTERTON, *New York Times*, 1 Feb., 1931.

Most Americans are born drunk. . . . They have a sort of permanent intoxication from within, a sort of invisible champagne. . . . Americans do not need to drink to inspire them to do anything.

G. K. CHESTERTON, *N. Y. Times Magazine*, 28 June, 1931.

I hate this shallow Americanism which hopes to get rich by credit, to get knowledge by raps on midnight tables, to learn the economy of the mind by phrenology, or skill without study, or mastery without apprenticeship.

EMERSON, *Society and Solitude: Success*.

She behaves as if she were beautiful. Most American women do. It is the secret of their charm.

OSCAR WILDE, *Picture of Dorian Grey*, ch. 3.

Emerson says that the Englishman of all men stands most firmly on his feet. But it is not whole of man's mission to be found standing, even at the most important post. Let him take one step forward,—and in that advancing figure you have the American.

T. W. HIGGINSON, *Americanism in Literature*.

This will never be a civilized country until we expend more money for books than we do for chewing-gum.

ELBERT HUBBARD, *The Philistine*. Vol. XXV, p. 1.

First, the sweetheart of the nation, then her aunt, woman governs America because America is a land of boys who refuse to grow up.

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA, *Americans Are Boys*.

The American people will never carry an umbrella. They prepare to walk in eternal sunshine.

ALFRED E. SMITH, in *Syndicate article*, 1931.

One day we will cast out the passion for Europe, by the passion for America.

EMERSON, *Conduct of Life: Considerations by the Way*.

An American coming to Europe for his education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, *Writings*. Vol. V, p. 185.

'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world.

WASHINGTON, *Farewell Address*, 17 Sept., 1796.

The capital defect of life in America: namely, that compared with life in England it is so uninteresting, so without savour and without depth.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Letter*, written in 1886, during his second visit to America.

The American never imitates the Englishman in simply taking for granted both his own patriotism and his own superiority.

G. K. CHESTERTON, *Generally Speaking*, p. 234.

The fact is that the Americans are not a thoughtful people; they are too busy to stop and question their values.

DEAN W. R. INGE. (Marchant, Wit and Wisdom of Dean Inge. No. 217.)

For some reason or other, the European has rarely been able to see America except in caricature.

J. R. LOWELL, *On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners*.

The desire for riches is their ruling passion.

DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT-LIANCOURT,  
*Travels Throughout the United States of North America*, 1798.

All men in America make money their pursuit.

RICHARD PARKINSON, *A Tour of America*, 1805.

The most materialistic people in the world.

G. W. STEEVENS, *The Land of the Dollar*.

Huge American rattle of gold.

HENRY JAMES, *The American Scene*.

In hardness and materialism, exaggeration and boastfulness; in a false smartness, a false audacity, a want of soul and delicacy.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Discourses on America*, 1884.

The youth of America is their oldest tradition. It has been going on now for three hundred years.

OSCAR WILDE, *A Woman of no Importance*, Act I.

The America they [French] know is tourist America—rich, careless, dominating. . . . They believe she is entirely materialistic; . . .

with all their great qualities, the insularity of the French is something like a danger to the world. For the assessment of national motives is at bottom the thing that forms the stereotype out of which foreign policy emerges.

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 1390.

I am willing to love all mankind, except an American.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Boswell's Life*, April 15, 1778.

See what it is to have a nation to take its place among civilized states before it has either gentlemen or scholars. They have in the course of twenty years acquired a distinct national character for low, lying knavery.

ROBERT SOUTHEY, *Letter to W. S. Landor*, 1812.

I detest the American character as much as you do.

W. S. LANDOR, *Letter to Robert Southey*, 1812.

Two selfish gods, pleasure and gain, enslave the Americans.

WILLIAM FAUX, *Memorable Days in America*, 1823.

That singular people who know a little, and but a little, of everything.

JOHN NEAL, *Brother Jonathan*, I, 1825.

One of the most amiable features in the character of American society is this: that men never boast of their riches, and never disguise their poverty.

WILLIAM COBBETT, *Advice to Young Men*, II, 1829.

We are a puny and a fickle folk. Avarice, hesitation, and following are our diseases.

R. W. EMERSON, *The Method of Nature*, 1849.

The American is only the continuation of the English genius into new conditions, more or less propitious.

R. W. EMERSON, *English Traits*, III, 1856.

The Americans, like the English, probably make love worse than any other race.

WALT WHITMAN, *An American Primer*, c. 1856.

From the very beginning our people have markedly combined practical capacity for affairs with power of devotion to an ideal. The lack of either quality would have rendered the possession of the other of small value.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, *Speech in Philadelphia*, November 22, 1902.

An American has no sense of privacy. He does not know what it means. There is no such thing in the country.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *Address in New York*, April 11, 1933.

Americans generally are an arrogant, self-centered, dogmatic and unreflecting lot. What they call frankness is merely the result of prejudice.

Editorial in the *Tokyo Yomiuri*, October 23, 1939.

The Americans are going to be the most fluent and melodious-voiced people in the world—and the most perfect users of words.

WALT WHITMAN, *An American Primer*, c. 1856.

I very seldom, during my whole stay in the country, heard a sentence elegantly turned and correctly pronounced from the lips of an American.

FRANCES TROLLOPE, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, v, 1832.

One of the things that must strike the foreigner in the United States is that whereas most men have a host of acquaintances, few have friends. . . . Now when you consider how sociable the Americans are, how amiable and cordial, this is very strange. The only explanation I can offer myself is that the pace of life in the United States is so great that few men have time for friendship. Leisure is needed for acquaintance to deepen into intimacy. Another possible explanation is that in America when a man marries his wife engulfs

him. She demands his undivided attention and she makes his home his prison.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 316.

England is a paradise for women, and hell for horses: Italy is a paradise for horses, hell for women.

BURTON, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Pt. III, Sec. III, Memb. I, Subsect. 2.

The first of all English games is making money.

RUSKIN, *Crown of Wild Olive*: Work.

How I love English boldness! how I love the people who say what they think.

VOLTAIRE.

England is a domestic country; there the home is revered, the hearth sacred.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, *Speech*, 3 April, 1872.

Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live.

MILTON, *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.

Our cloudy climate and our chilly women.

BYRON, *Beppo*. St. 49.

My general impression is that Englishmen act better than Frenchmen, and Frenchwomen better than Englishwomen.

ARNOLD BENNETT, *The Crisis in the Theatre*. (Preface to *Cupid and Commonsense*.)

The greatest benefit of the Eton school, says the report in an English blue book, is the serenity and repose of character which it gives to its graduates, and which, as the document says, . . . , is a well-known trait of the character of the English gentlemen.

EMERSON, *Uncollected Lectures*: Public and Private Education.

Cool and quite English, imperturbable.

BYRON, *Don Juan*. Canto xiii, St. 14.

Of all the nations in the world, at present, the English are the stupidest in speech, the wisest in action.

THOMAS CARLYLE, *Past and Present*. Bk. iii, ch. 5.

The ancient. . . spirit of Englishmen was once expressed by our proverb, "Better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion"; i.e. the first of the yeomanry rather than the last of the gentry.

ISAAC D'ISRAELI, *Curiosities of Literature*. Ser. ii, p. 447.

I find the Englishman to be him of all men who stands firmest in his shoes.

EMERSON, *English Traits*, p. 106.

The most honest people in the world are the French who think and the British who talk.

SAINT-EVERMOND. (*Inge, Wit and Wisdom: Preface.*)

A Frenchman must always be talking, whether he knows anything of the matter or not; an Englishman is content to say nothing when he has nothing to say.

SAMUEL JOHNSON. (*Boswell, Life, 1779.*)

The English are a dumb people.

THOMAS CARLYLE, *Past and Present*. Bk. iii, ch. 5.

Silence—a conversation with an Englishman.

HEINRICH HEINE.

If an earthquake were to engulf England to-morrow, the English would manage to meet and dine somewhere among the rubbish, just to celebrate the event.

DOUGLAS JERROLD, *Remark, made in Museum Club.*  
(*Blanchard Jerrold, Life.*)

An Englishman hath three qualities, he can suffer no partner in his love, no stranger to be his equal, nor to be dared by any.

JOHN LYLY, *Euphues and His England*.

How hard it is to make an Englishman acknowledge that he is happy!

THACKERAY, *Pendennis*. Bk. ii, ch. 31.

Not only England but every Englishman is an island.

NOVALIS, *Fragments*, 1799.

Every one of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable.

EMERSON, *English Traits*, p. 109.

The Englishman's strong point is a vigorous insularity which he carries with him, portable and sometimes insupportable.

T. W. HIGGINSON, *Americanism in Literature*.

Great eaters of meat are in general more cruel and ferocious than other men. The cruelty of the English is known.

ROUSSEAU, *Emile*. Bk. ii.

The English are never so weak as at home, nor so easy to conquer.

C. L. MONTESQUIEU, *The Spirit of the Laws*, IX, 1748.

The English are a busy people. They haven't the time to become polished.

C. L. MONTESQUIEU, *Pensées*, c. 1750.

The English are close friends, but distant acquaintance.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND, *The West Indian*, II, 1771.

The English are the most disagreeable of all the nations of Europe,—more surly and morose, with less disposition to please, to exert themselves for the good of society, to make small sacrifices, and to put themselves out of their way.

SYDNEY SMITH, *In the Edinburgh Review*, 1818.

The people of English stock, in all countries, are a solid people wearing good hats and shoes, and owners of land whose title deeds are properly recorded.

EMERSON, *The Superlative*, 1847.

The English nation is never so great as in adversity.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, *Speech in the House of Commons*, August 11, 1857.

The English, more than any other people, not only act but feel according to rule.

J. S. MILL, *The Subjection of Women*, III, 1869.

They are not a philosophical race, the English.

NIETZSCHE, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 1886.

We are always serene in times of difficulty. We have staying power ; we are not rattled.

STANLEY BALDWIN, *Radio Speech*, September 25, 1933.

The land of scholars, and the nurse of arms.

GOLDSMITH, *The Traveller*, L. 356.

It is to the middle class we must look for the safety of England.

THACKERAY, *The Four Georges : George III.*

They are like their own beer : froth on the top, dregs at the bottom, the middle excellent.

VOLTAIRE, *referring to the British.*

An Englishman,

Being flatter'd, is a lamb ; threaten'd, a lion.

GEORGE, CHAPMAN, *Alphonsus*. Act I, Sc. 2.

There is a prose in certain Englishmen which exceeds in wooden deadness all rivalry with other countrymen.

EMERSON, *English Traits*, ch. 6.

The English (it must be owned) are rather a foul-mouthed nation.

WILLIAM HAZLITT, *Table-Talk : On Criticism*.

The English amuse themselves sadly according to the custom of their country.

DUC DE SULLY, *Memoirs*. (c. 1630)

An Englishman thinks he is moral when he is only uncomfortable.

BERNARD SHAW, *Man and Superman*, Act iii.

The only letter which Englishmen write in capital is I. This I think is the most pointed comment on their national character.

Attributed to Rubinstein.

How can what an Englishman believes be heresy? It is a contradiction in terms.

BERNARD SHAW, *Saint Joan*, Act IV.

No Englishman is ever fairly beaten.

BERNARD SHAW, *Saint Joan*, Act IV.

I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.

SWIFT, *Gulliver's Travels : Voyage to Brobdingnag*.

The gloomy Englishman, even in his loves, always wants to reason. We are more reasonable in France.

VOLTAIRE, *Nations*, Last lines.

I should like my country well enough, if it were not for my countrymen.

HORACE WALPOLE, *Letters*.

An Englishman thinks it a deadly insult if you say he is no gentleman, or, still worse, a liar; a Frenchman if you call him a coward; a German if you say he is stupid.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, 1851.

A Frenchman may possibly be clean : an Englishman is conscientiously clean.

EMERSON, *English Traits*, VI, 1856.

Every nation forms for itself a type to which it accords admiration, and though individuals are rarely found who correspond with it a consideration of it may be instructive and amusing. . . . It is an ideal to which writers of fiction seek to give body and substance. . . . It is a curious thing that writers can create characters which men afterwards make their own. [see Barker's remark on pp. 108-9] The type which seems most to captivate the fancy of the English today is that of the strong silent man. . . . silence though part of his definition, is not the characteristic most noticeable; in fact he tends to be verbose. But in principle he is taciturn; a man of few words and of a smaller vocabulary; he is very practical, . . . ; he is embarrassed in general company and his manners leave much to be desired; but, strangely enough, though awkward in his dealings with his fellow countrymen, he has a singular gift with natives. At a loss in a drawing-room, he is a match for the subtle Oriental. . . . He is not much of a reader, but such literature as he studies is sound, the Bible, Shakespeare, Marcus Aurelius and the Waverly novels. He is not a conversationalist, but when he speaks it is to go straight to the point; . . . He has no patience with art and his philosophical attitude is naïve. . . . His character is more excellent than his intellect.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 170-71.

The English almost always write well; being born orators and practical men, with a tendency to the real.

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann*, p. 56.

All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection, properly so called; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men.

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann*, p. 89.

The French and English, on the other hand, keep far more together, and guide themselves one by another. They harmonize in dress and manners. They fear to differ from one another, lest they should be

remarkable, or even ridiculous. But with the Germans each one goes his own way, and strives to satisfy himself; he does not ask about others, for, as Guizot rightly observes, he has within him the idea of personal freedom—from which comes much excellence, but also much absurdity.

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann, p. 314.*

There is something peculiar in this. Whether it lies in the race, in the soil, in the free political constitution, or in the healthy tone of education—certainly, the English in general appear to have certain advantages over many others.

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann, p. 255.*

The English seem made of pure earth: the French have more air mixed with their clay, the Italians more fire, the Germans more water.

*WILLIAM HAZLITT, Traveling Abroad, 1828, New Monthly Magazine, June.*

The Irish are hearty, the Scotch plausible, the French polite, the Germans good-natured, the Italians courtly, the Spaniards reserved and decorous—the English alone seem to exist in taking and giving offence.

*WILLIAM HAZLITT, Manners Make the Man, 1829, The Atlas, March 29.*

The great qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race are industry, intelligence, and self-confidence.

*ANTHONY TROLLOPE, North America, 1, 1862.*

We of the Anglo-Saxon race do not know how to enjoy ourselves; we do not know how to get the most out of this life that flies so rapidly.

*HENRY GEORGE, In the San Francisco State, April 12, 1879.*

If only the French would cease to occupy themselves with politics they would be the most attractive people in the world.

*HAROLD LASKI, Holmes—Laski Letters, p. 425.*

. . . and that attractive ability you find in the best Frenchmen of being able to make his knowledge a natural part of ordinary conversation.

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 493.

It is amazing, too, to see a people to whom equality means something so substantial as to the French. Talk to the man in the garage, or the peasant in the field, and he speaks to you with a vigour that is remarkable.

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 1322.

. . . and that perfect finish of style which the Frenchman at his best produces. I wish I knew why French professors write perfect French and American professors a queer academic dialect almost wholly devoid of a sense of humour.

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 1341.

That reminds me to ask you if you have ever reflected why Descartes is the only French philosopher of the first eminence. . . . There is nothing at all from Spain. If you take the Renaissance as the starting point him apart—you have to take as great names either Anglo-Saxons or Germans. There is nothing at all from Spain; nothing considerable from Italy; and if Masaryk is a fair guide nothing of even the second rank from Russia. (See Somerset Maugham's remark on Russians on p. 212.)

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 573.

The French, in their style, remain true to their general character. They are of a social nature, and therefore never forget the public whom they address; they strive to be clear, that they may convince their reader—agreeable, that they may please him.

*Conversations of Goethe with Eckermann*, p. 56.

The French are wiser than they seem, and the Spaniards seem wiser than they are.

FRANCIS BACON, *Essay*, XXVI, 1612.

The French have more real politeness, and the English the better method of expressing it.

DAVID HUME, *Letter to Michael Ramsay*, September 12.  
1734.

The English are proud ; the French are vain.

J. J. ROUSSEAU, *Emile*, VI, 1762.

The thirst for truth is not a French passion. In everything appearance is preferred to reality, the outside to the inside, the fashion to the material, that which shines to that which profits, opinion to conscience. That is to say, the Frenchman's centre of gravity is always outside him,—he is always thinking of others, playing to the gallery.

AMIEL, *Journal*, 22 Jan., 1875.

The most frivolous and fickle of civilized nations— . . .

WALTER BAGEHOT, *Literary Studies* : Shakespeare.

The French tongue, which is the speech of the clear, the cheerful, or the august among men.

JOHN MORLEY, *Rousseau*, p. 436.

I wonder if that belief [native badness of man] is not easier to a Frenchman than to us because I wonder if he has not more of the subterranean meannesses than the average Englishman.

HAROLD LASKI, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 763.

Frenchmen are like gunpowder, each by itself smutty and contemptible ; but mass them together, they are terrible indeed !

S. T. COLERIDGE, *Table-Talk*.

The Frenchman, easy, debonair and brisk,  
Give him his lass, his fiddle, and his frisk,  
Is always happy, reign whoever may,  
And laughs the sense of mis'ry far away.

COWPER, *Table-Talk*, I, 237.

There is a quality in which no woman in the world can compete with her [French woman],—it is the power of intellectual irritation. She will draw wit out of a fool.

Attributed to William Shenstone.

The French are excellent in this, they have a book on every subject.

SAMUEL JOHNSON. (*Boswell, Life*, 1783.)

A Frenchman loves his mother—in the abstract.

HENRY SETON MERRIMAN, *The Sowers*, ch. 3.

Your nation is divided into two species: the one of idle monkeys who mock at everything; and the other of tigers who tear.

VOLTAIRE, *Letter to Madame du Deffand*, 21 Nov., 1766.

Something of the monkey aspect inseparable from a little Frenchman.

HAWTHORNE, *Journals*, 5 July, 1837.

. . . it was France that educated me, France that taught me to value beauty, distinction, wit and good sense, France that taught me to write. . . She must be prepared to learn from peoples she has too long despised that a nation cannot have strength without sacrifice, efficiency without integrity, and freedom without discipline.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 318-19.

It hath been an opinion that the French are wiser than they seem.

FRANCIS BACON, *Essays*, XXVI, 1625.

The French are the only people, except the Greeks, who have been at once philosophers, poets, orators, historians, painters, architects, sculptors, and musicians.

DAVID HUME, *Of Civil Liberty*, 1740.

The French are an indelicate people; they will spit upon any place.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Boswell's Life*, 1775.

The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people; a lady there will spit on the floor and rub it with her feet.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, *Boswell's Life*, May 14, 1778.

A nation of right merry fellows, possessing the true secret of being happy, which is nothing more than thinking of nothing, talking about anything, and laughing at everything.

WASHINGTON IRVING, *Salmagundi*, February 13, 1807.

The French have understanding and *esprit*, but neither a solid basis nor piety. What serves the moment, what helps his party, seems right to the Frenchman.

GOETHE, *Conversations with Eckermann*, November 24, 1824.

The passion of nearly every Frenchman is to pass for a wit.

C. L. DE MONTESQUIEU, *Persian Letters*, LXVI, 1721.

A Frenchman who, with a fund of virtue, learning and good sense, has the manners and good breeding of his country, is the perfection of human nature.

LORD CHESTERFIELD, *Letter to his son*, March 6, 1747.

A true German can't endure a Frenchman, but he likes his wine.

GOETHE, *1 Faust*, I, 1808.

Set him to write poetry, he is limited, artificial and impotent; set him to write prose, he is free, natural and effective.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *The Literary Influence of Academies*, 1865.

The Germans are very seldom troubled with any extraordinary abollitions or effervescences of wit, and it is not prudent to try it upon them.

LORD CHESTERFIELD, *Letter to his son*, July, 21, 1752.

A German loves fighting for its own sake.

HORACE WALPOLE, *Letter to H. S. Conway*, October 4, 1762.

Christianity has somewhat softened the brutal Germanic lust of battle, but could not destroy it.

HEINRICH HEINE, *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, 1834.

Everything that is ponderous, viscous and pompously clumsy, all long-winded and wearying kinds of style, are developed in great variety among Germans.

NIETZSCHE, *Beyond Good and Evil*, XXVIII, 1886.

We Germans will never produce another Goethe, but we may produce another Cæsar.

OSWALD SPENGLER, *Bemühungen*, 1925.

Germany is like a brave and gallant horse, highly fed, but without a good rider; . . . so Germany is also a powerful, rich, and brave country, but needs a good head and government.

MARTIN LUTHER, *Table-Talk*, DCCCLXXXV, 1569.

Germany is the only country I have visited where the hands of the men are better cared for than the hands of the women.

PRICE COLLIER, *Germany and Germans*, p. 280.

Germans are honest men.

SHAKESPEARE, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iv, 5, 73.

I dislike Belgium and think the Belgians, on the whole, the most contemptible people in Europe.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Letter to Miss Arnold*, 1859.

The Italians are wise before the deed; the Germans in the deed; the French after the deed.

GEORGE HERBERT, *Jacula Prudentum*.

Subtle, discerning, eloquent, the slave  
Of Love, of Hate, for ever in extremes;  
Gentle when unprovoked, easily won,  
But quick in quarrel—through a thousand shades,  
His spirit flits, chameleon-like; and mocks  
The eye of the observer.

SAMUEL ROGERS, *Italy: Venice*.

The Spaniard is a bad servant but a worse master.

THOMAS ADAMS, *Sermons*, Vol. i, p. 116, 1629.

The land of war and crimes. (ref. to Spain)

BYRON, *Child Harold*, Canto ii, St. 16.

In settling an island, the first building erected by a Spaniard will be a church ; by a Frenchman, a fort ; by a Dutchman, a warehouse ; and by an Englishman, an alchouse.

FRANCIS GROSE, *A Provincial Glossary*, 1797.

So long as the Austrian has his beer and sausages he will not revolt.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN, *Letter to Nikolans Simrock*, August 2, 1794.

No Italian can hate an Austrian more than I do ; unless it be the English, the Austrians seem to me the most obnoxious race under the sky.

BYRON, *Letter to John Murray*, April 16, 1820.

The farther I journey towards the West, the more convinced I am that the wise men came from the East.

WILLIAM DAVY, *King's Serjeant*, 1762. (*Woolrych, Lives of Eminent Serjeants at Law*. Vol. ii, p. 621.)

Men look to the East for the dawning things,  
for the light of a rising sun  
But they look to the West, to the crimson  
West, for the things that are done, are  
done.

DOUGLAS MALLOCH, *East and West*.

From the East comes light, from the West law.

Unknown. A Latin proverb.

The Chinese are cunning and ingenious ; and have a great talent at bowing out ambassadors who come to visit them.

LEIGH HUNT, *The Indicator*, XVIII, 1821.

Its absolute indifference to the profoundest spiritual truths in the nature of man is the most melancholy characteristic of the Chinese mind—its ready acceptance of a body without a soul, of a soul without a spirit, of a spirit without life, of a cosmos without a cause, a universe without a God.

A. H. SMITH, *Chinese Characteristics*, 1890.

If religion is held to mean more than mere ethics, I deny that the Chinese have a religion.

T. F. WADE, *The Hsin Ching Lu*, 1859.

In all ages the Chinese find a peculiar and awful satisfaction in watching the agonies of the dying.

E. J. DINGLE, *Across China on Foot*, 1911.

There are only two kinds of Chinese—those who give bribes and those who take them.

Russian Proverb.

. . . , and at once was impressed by the good breeding of the East.

JUSTICE HOLMES, *Holmes—Laski Letters*, p. 1260.

The Greeks have never been simpletons ; for centuries past they have been distinguished from other nations by superior wits ; and of all Greeks the Athenians are allowed to be the most intelligent : . . .

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 35.

Yet, from what I hear, the Greeks are pugnacious enough, and starts fighting on the spur of the moment without sense or judgement to justify them.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 417.

Believe me, it is not in the Greek character to take so desperate a risk.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 418.

'But you, my lord, mean to attack a nation greatly superior to the Scythians : a nation with the highest reputation for valour both on land and at sea.' (ref. to Greeks)

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 418.

' . . . You have now to deal with the finest kingdom in Greece, and with the bravest men.'

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 488.

Again, there is the Greek nation—the common blood, the common language; the temples and religious rituals; the whole way of life we understand and share together— . . .

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 550.

The Greeks in general have a weakness for inventing stories with no basis of fact.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 120.

. . . , and of all animals cows are universally held by the Egyptians in the greatest reverence.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 118.

No nation regards the sanctity of a pledge more seriously than the Arabs.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 176.

. . . ; for the Persians are in the habit of treating the sons of kings with honour, and even of restoring to their sons the thrones of those who have rebelled against them.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 180.

These two stories will show the importance which the Scythians attach to their national traditions, and the severity of the punishments they inflict upon anyone who introduces alien customs.

HERODOTUS, *History*, p. 268.

There is a deep streak of masochism in Russians. . . the women are described as large and strong, energetic, audacious and cruel. They use men with every sort of indignity. Russian fiction is full of characters of this sort. Dostoevsky's heroines are of this over-bearing type; tenderness, sweetness, gentleness, charm do not appeal to the men who love them; . . . Turgenev's heroines are intelligent, alert, active and enterprising, while the men are weak of will, dreamers incapable of action. It is a characteristic of Russian fiction, and I imagine it corresponds to a deep-rooted instinct in the Russian character.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 154.

It is humour which discerns the infinite variety of human beings, and if Russian novels offer only a restricted variety of types it is perhaps because they are singularly lacking in humour. In Russian fiction you will look in vain for wit and repartee, bandiage, the rapier thrust of sarcasm, the intellectual refreshment of the epigram, or the lighthearted jest.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 153.

I can't think of a single Russian novel in which one of the characters goes to a picture gallery.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 155.

Do scoundrels have no songs? Then how is it that the Russians have them?

NIETZSCHE, *The Twilight of the Idols*, 1889.

It is singular that the Russians who occupy themselves so much with questions of man's destiny and the meaning of the world should have so little talent for metaphysical discussion. They have produced no philosopher even of the second rank. They seem to have no capacity for accurate and profound thought.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 156.

They [Russians] are strangely primitive in the completeness with which they surrender themselves to emotion. With English people, for instance, there is a solid background of character which emotion modifies, but which in turn reacts on emotion; with the Russians it looks as though each emotion took complete possession of the individual and swayed him wholly.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM, *A Writer's Notebook*, p. 165.

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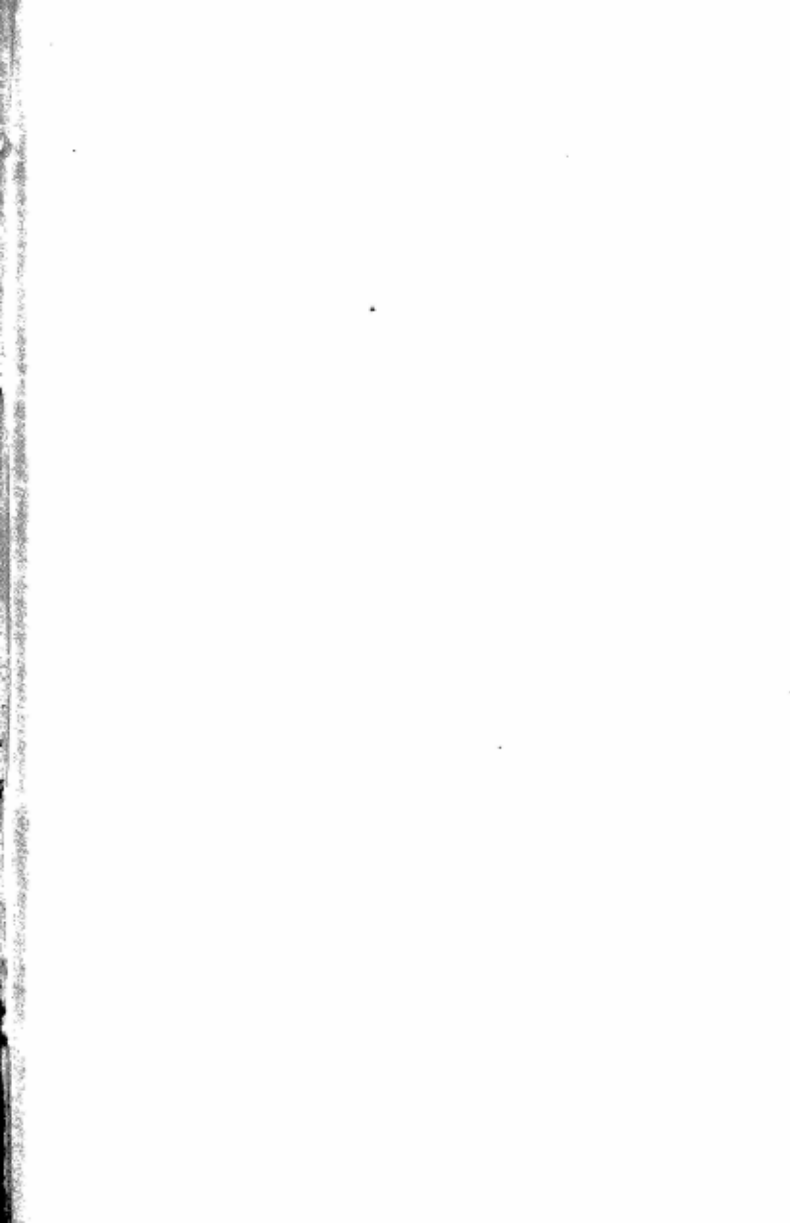
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